

Precept Upon Precept

Volume 2

Precept Upon Precept

Volume 2

by
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Precept Upon Precept

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Foreword

Henry T. Mahan was born in Birmingham, Alabama on August 19, 1926. He began pastoring at the young age of twenty-one and had wide experience in the pastoral ministry, and as a Bible Conference speaker. He was pastor of Thirteenth Street Baptist Church, Ashland, Kentucky, for fifty years, having retired in 2003. After Pastor Mahan retired, he continued to travel and to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in many different churches for a number of years. In 2008 Henry and Doris moved to Rocky Mount, Virginia. There they worshipped where his son Paul is the pastor. He continued for several years doing a Sunday morning radio program in Rocky Mount. In May 2019, the Lord was pleased to call our brother home. I remember what someone said at his memorial service, “He being dead yet speaketh.”

For his congregation’s spiritual instruction, Pastor Mahan published a weekly bulletin over those fifty years, sharing them by mail with other pastors, churches, and believers around the country. Many of those pastors have used the bulletin articles extensively in their own church bulletins.

Having personally benefited over the last forty years in reading the articles and using them the last twenty-six years of my ministry at Zebulon Grace Church, you will always find them full of the gospel of Christ. Pastor Mahan continually points sinners to look to Christ for all of salvation, and they are full of strong and vital instructions from the word of the Lord; constantly declaring that salvation is of the Lord.

We are now very excited, and thankful for the opportunity, to put volume 2 of his bulletin articles, written from 1988-2003, into book format for distribution. It is our prayer the Lord will bless these short articles to the furtherance of the gospel, to the comfort of the believer, and to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor Tom Harding
Zebulon Grace Church
Pikeville, Kentucky

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1988

Good News!

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place?

Psalm 24:3

The answer comes, “He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully” (Ps. 24:4).

Then none shall ascend, much less stand in his holy place; for there is none clean nor pure. Wait! There is one! All of these conditions are fulfilled by one, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. “No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.”

There is a man in glory! A man who was made of woman, a man who walked the earth, a man who lived in human flesh, a man who was tempted in all points as we are, a man under the law, but a man who was holy, harmless, and undefiled. This man knew no sin, had no sin, and did no sin. He not only ascended and stood, but he is accepted and seated by divine direction on the right hand of majesty.

Another question comes. What is all that to me? It is good news to me, for the man in glory is not a private individual but a representative, acting in the place of others. He is authorized by the Father and appointed as the federal head of a chosen race. All that he has done, accomplished, and perfected in life and death is imputed to those who believe, as if they had done it themselves. He is our head. And if the head is risen, ascended, and accepted, so is the body!

Being one with Christ, all believers have clean hands, pure hearts, holy souls, and truthful tongues, and are seated with him in the heavenlies. Can you believe on him? Can you rest your soul in him?

Living Proof of the Evident Grace of God

When believers walk in truth and love, when they adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour with generous, gracious, and exemplary lives and behavior, they glorify God (Matt. 5:16). The fruit of righteousness, by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, as displayed by a believer, not only glorifies the power, mercy, and grace of God in them but causes others to glorify God too.

Our fruitfulness does not make us disciples of Christ; rather, it is the clear proof and evidence that we are his disciples. The fruit does not make a tree good; the tree is first good, and the fruit is the evidence the tree is good.

All Are His

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein.

Psalm 24:1

Men live on the earth and divide it into countries ruled over by kings. They divide it into states and territories and give them names. They divide the land among themselves into farms and ranches, and issue deeds of ownership.

But the earth is not man's; it is the Lord's. He said, "Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine" (Job 41:11). Men are but tenants, subject to eviction at any moment. The great landowner and sovereign sits in the heavens and laughs at the title deeds of these worms in the dust.

"The fullness thereof" may mean the fullness of its entirety; its wealth, its life, its past, present, and future. The sea is full of water, despite all the creatures, despite all that feed upon it. The air is full, notwithstanding all the lungs that breathe it. The soil is full, though billions of trees, plants, and vegetables derive nourishment from it.

All the earth and all that dwell on the earth belong to the Lord Jesus. They are his sons or his servants; they are his sheep or his goats; they are his vessels of mercy or his vessels of wrath; but all are His.

And here is the chief reason, given in Vs. 2 of the same Psalm: "For He hath founded it." He created it! He has the right to do with his own what he will. O that men would be wise and praise the Lord, kiss the Son, and bow before him in worship and subjection. "There is no want to them who fear the Lord and wait upon him."

His Commandments Are Not Grievous

1 John 5:3

It is more profitable and enjoyable to love than to hate, to forgive than to hold a grudge, to smile than to quarrel, to behave kindly than to act ugly. The way of the transgressor is hard, not the way of the believer. The life of faith and love is the good life.

He That Is of God Heareth God's Word

John 8:47

Sometimes we get very frustrated and depressed because men and women reject the counsel of God, and deny the truth so evidently declared in his word. Well, I can tell you this; if a person belongs to God by eternal election, has been born of God by divine regeneration, and is truly indwelt by the Holy Spirit of truth, he will hear God's word and receive it with affection, reverence, and obedience!

Words to Die By

“Speak to me now in Scripture language alone,” said a dying Christian. “I can trust the words of God; but, when they are the words of man, it costs me an effort to think whether I may trust them.”

The Seeing Eye and The Hearing Hear

Only God can open a sinner's eyes, for the hearing ear and the seeing eye are of the Lord (Prov. 20:12). We may put truth before men, but only God can make them to see it (Ps. 146:8). Once Satan promised to open a man's eyes; but the man saw only shame, not glory (Gen. 3:5-7).

Encourage One Another Through Correspondence

The U.S. mail affords us a wonderful opportunity to keep in touch, brighten someone's day, encourage our brothers, and express love and

friendship. It takes such a small effort to sit down and write a note to a friend, and it affords such great joy and encouragement.

I might add, it has come to my attention that some have written letters and received no response. This is inexcusable and shows a lack of compassion and grace. To receive a letter, gift, or contact and not to respond is beyond my understanding.

Religion Has Always Been the Enemy of Christ

The true believer has conflict with the religious world. The greatest enemies of Christ have always been those who boasted of their knowledge of God. It was in the synagogue that the death of Christ was plotted. It was in the cathedrals that the reformers were tried and burned. It is in the churches and the seminaries that the gospel of grace is denied.

A Universal Principle

This ministry must be owned and blessed of God or it will come to naught. The farmer plows and sows and then leaves the harvest to God! What else can he do? He cannot bring rain nor command the sun to shine nor make the seed to bear.

So it is with us; true wisdom does what God commands and leaves the results in his hands. And you can apply this principle to all that concerns you.

The Difference Between Assurance and Presumption

Augustine once said, "To be assured of our interest in Christ is not arrogance; it is faith. It is not pride; it is devotion. It is not presumption; it is God's promise."

If assurance of salvation rested in my works, it would be presumption (even foolishness); but we believe God will receive all who come to him in Christ Jesus.

A Faithful Witness

Some of you may carry a feeling of guilt because you have not put more pressure on your neighbors, friends, and family to attend church, believe the gospel of God's grace, and receive Christ. I would not, for a second, excuse indifference nor justify those who are ashamed of the gospel, for the true believer has no greater joy than the joy of glorifying God and telling a sinner the good news of God's mercy in Christ.

But, in our day, it is most difficult to find a sinner! Almost everyone I know wants to discuss or argue religion, find answers to foolish question, or tell us how good they are and how certain it is that they shall be in heaven. I refuse to carry the blame for their condemnation; it rests upon them. They have a Bible they refuse to read, they have a conscience they refuse to heed, they have faithful preachers they refuse to hear, and they have a God they refuse to worship and glorify! Their condemnation is just (Ps. 51:4).

I stand ready and eager to preach the gospel to all who will hear, to give a taped sermon to all who will listen, to share my experience with all who are interested, and to witness about Christ, the bread and water of life, to all who are hungry and thirsty. But I also stand ready to praise and glorify the righteous justice of God in the condemnation of rebels and self-righteous men.

Natural men "will not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead;" however, they will be persuaded if God, by his Spirit and Word, raises them from the dead! So preach the word and leave the pressure and persuasion to him who said, "It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit."

Rejoice

Let us learn the meaning of the word "rejoice," not just in doctrine, but in experience. There is always cause to rejoice in the Lord—in his blood that cleanses, his righteousness that perfects, his love which never fails, his providence which works all things for our good, his intercession, which is continual, and in the fact that our names are in the Book of Life—all by his grace!

Stewardship

Thank God that we have the privilege of being personally and vitally involved in the lives and ministry of so many pastors, churches, and missionaries. They are the servants of our Lord; and it is our blessed privilege to pray for them, encourage them, and help them in every way that we can. “Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Let us not look so much on our own things as on the things of others. The best way I know of receiving God’s blessings is to give them away; and the surest way to keep God’s mercies flowing into your silo is to have the feed door always open, for God has appointed no man nor church to be his bankers, only his stewards. “Lord, teach me your word and I’ll teach others. Reveal your gospel to me and I’ll preach it to all who will listen. Shed abroad your love in my heart and I will love others. Forgive me as I forgive. Entrust me with gifts and I will give to those who have need. Help me, by thy grace, to be a channel of blessings and not a dead sea.”

May I ask a question? Who is on your mind and heart today? Or even this week? Whom have you encouraged? Whose burden have you lifted? For whom have you prayed? Called? Written? What contribution have you made to the furtherance of the gospel?

To those who reach out, I encourage you to continue to do so; and, to those who have not yet discovered the joy of giving and helping, I say, “It is his way!”

Consider the Source

God takes more account of heart knowledge than head knowledge, and of the motive more than act.

The Nature of our King

Many years ago, having offended the king, a noble was brought before James II of England. “You know that it is in my power,” said the king, “to pardon you.” The man, knowing the cruel character of James, replied, “It is in your power, but it is not in your nature.”

We have offended the Lord God and are justly condemned. However, I rejoice that it is not only in his power to pardon, but also his nature to show mercy and to forgive.

A Friend of Sinners

When you feel like saying, “There is no hope for me; I am too great a sinner; I am too weak and unworthy,” let me remind you of a few things:

You women, have you read of the women who were in the lineage of our Lord (Mt. 1:3-6)? What did they have to recommend them to God? Have you read of Mary Magdalene or the harlot who kissed his feet? It seems to me that the only thing they all had in common was their sin and their need of him.

You men, pick out any of the true followers of our Lord—Peter, the man in the tombs, Zacchaeus, the thief on the cross, Saul of Tarsus—and tell me what good you can find in them.

Dear sinner friend, my Master always goes where he is most needed and most wanted—among the chief of sinners! Let others preach to the self-righteous; my gospel is designed for those who labor and are heavy-laden, for those who have nothing, are nothing, and can do nothing but cast themselves on his loving mercy!

Let me say, your sins can never keep you from Christ, but your righteousness will.

The Problems with Modern Day Televangelism

There are several major problems with the televangelists, besides their lifestyle, which seem to dominate the news these days.

They make little or nothing of the local church. God never intended for us to follow national personalities nor worship around a television set. He has established in all places his local assembly of believers under the leadership of a pastor and teacher. The local church is of major importance in worship, in the preaching of the gospel, in the fellowship of God’s people, in training preachers, in sending out missionaries, and in administering the ordinances. That which minimizes the local church (or all but does away with it) is not of God.

They minimize the preaching of the word and specialize in music, entertainment, and set decorations that appeal to the flesh. If there are any words in a song that would glorify Christ, they are lost in the glare of lights, the accompaniment of the big band, the showmanship of the singer, and camera shots of the surroundings. But little or no preaching of the word is done; for the time must be given to raising money, lauding

personalities, and promoting the leader, whose name and image must be constantly before us.

They do not preach Christ! His name may be mentioned, but he is not their message. Their message is not the inability of man but the importance of men. Their message is not the glory and sovereignty of God but helplessness of their god without the cooperation of the human will. Their message is not how can God be just and justifier in Christ Jesus but how can we use God to promote our health, wealth, and happiness.

The spirit they talk about is not the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit of God does not call attention to himself and his gifts; he glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. “He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you” (Jn. 16:14).

I strongly oppose all of these merchandizers of souls and pray for the day when they shall be exposed for what they are—enemies of the cross!

Brethren in Christ

In Christ there is no great and small, no important and unimportant, but only sinners saved by his grace. We are all brethren.

That Door is Closed

If I had died as a child, I would be assured of a place in glory; but, that door is closed. I am an adult. If I had been holy in birth and perfect in life, I would reign with Christ; but I was born in sin and even my righteousnesses are filthy rags, so that door is closed.

What shall I do? Is there no door open to such as I? Yes, there is one! Christ said, “I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture” (Jn. 10:9). Am I such a fool that I will turn from that one, God-given door, and perish? God forbid!

Don't Look Back

Men in the days of Spurgeon looked back to the days of Whitefield; men in the days of Whitefield looked back to the days of Calvin and Luther; men in those days wept for the days of the apostles. Some men look more to the past than to the present. But is not our Lord Jesus the same yesterday, today, and forever? This is my day and his day. Therefore, let me minister today!

Out of the Ashes of Sodom

Why was Lot in Sodom in the first place? There were no fellow-believers there with whom to worship. There was no prophet there to preach the word of God. The people of Sodom were a terrible influence on his children, and his own soul was vexed by the wickedness of the place. So why did he live there?

I suppose for the same reasons many today live where they do. The wages were higher in Sodom. The fields were more fertile, and he had a fine farm with many cattle. He had invested many years and much labor in his business. He was too old to move and start over. I'm sure, before the angles came, Lot could have given many reasons why he could not leave Sodom.

But out of the ashes of Sodom and the experience in the cave, Lot had different thoughts. What he would have given to have turned back the clock and been able to live with Abraham and the people of God, even if on thirty acres of mountainside land! "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith" (Prov. 15:16).

Who is Your God?

Concerning the character of God, what gross mistakes men make! I believe it is a mistake about the person of God himself which is at the root and foundation of all the mistakes in theology. My conviction is that the free-will theology of today makes God to be less than he is. The professors of that system have come to receive its doctrines because they have no clear understanding of the omnipotence, the immutability, or the sovereignty of God.

God has an absolute right to do what he will, with whom he will, when he will. He has the power also to accomplish his will and the ransom which enables him to be true to his character in the carrying out of that will. When Almighty God comes to the soul of a man in grace, none can stay his hand. The enemy's power is broken and the sinner is made willing. Satan cannot stay the conquering hand of Jehovah and the sinner wants to be conquered.

When one truly sees the holiness, mercy, righteousness, grace, justice, and love of God in Christ, rising like a mighty sun, it cannot but put an end to the darkness of will-worship and modern fundamentalism. What will your God do? How will your God do what he does? Tell me who he is!

If your God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient and dwells in the heavens, he will do what he pleases. If he is any less than this, then he must wait to see what you will do. But the subdued king in Daniel 4:35 declared, “He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say unto him, what doest thou?”

“How helpless and hopeless we sinners had been,
If he had not loved us and cleansed us from sin;
Unto him who has loved us and washed us from sin,
Unto him be the glory forever! Amen!”

Do Not Praise the Dead and Shun the Living

If I truly believe the gospel of God’s sovereign grace and glory, I will not hesitate to be fully identified with those who believe and preach that gospel in my day. Paul said to Timothy, “Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner.”

It is cowardice and compromising to brag on dead preachers like Spurgeon, Pink, and Barnard, and yet fail to support, encourage, and hear those who preach the same gospel now! Such professors who never bear the scars of battle will never wear the crown. Those who shun the good fight of faith in their day will never celebrate the victory in that great day of our Lord.

Six Arguments for Holiness of Life

1 John 2:29-3:6

(Vs. 29) “If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him.” To be born of God is to have the nature, presence, and grace of Christ formed in us.

(Vs. 1) “Behold, what manner of love the Father bestowed on us, that we should be called sons of God.” This is a privilege and a blessing that exceeds all others. How can we serve sin and self when we have received such love?

(Vs. 2-3) “Now are we sons of God, and when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” The man that has such a hope in him, who has a real

desire to be like Christ, will make every effort to be like him now. It is foolish for a man to say, “I want to be like Christ someday but not now.”

(Vs. 4) Everyone who practices sin as a course of life is lawless, a transgressor of the law of God. And no true believer can be happy outside of the will and fellowship of God as revealed in his commandments.

(Vs. 5) “He was manifested to take away our sins...” Not only the curse of sin and the penalty of sin, but the reigning power of sin.

(Vs. 6) Those who know Christ and abide in him do not habitually and deliberately practice sin. They hate sin in them and about them. They grieve over their falls and lack of grace. They desire to manifest the fruit of the Spirit in word and deed.

Five Conditions to True Prayer

Here are five conditions to true prayer from Psalm 130:1-2.

1. A lowly position— “Out of the depths”
2. A fervent appeal— “have I cried”
3. A direct address— “Unto thee,”
4. A reverent attitude— “O Lord.”
5. A desperate need— “Lord, hear my voice.”

If the King really hears the voice of the beggar and his ears are attentive to our cry, nothing else matters. It matters little what I say or how I say it, what matters is he hears!

Love One Another

Beloved, let us love one another.

1 John 4:7

Not just love our family, friends, and those who love us, but all people, especially all believers! “For love is of God.” That is, love not only is the command of God, according to his will and well-pleasing in his sight, but love comes from God. It is the fruit of his Spirit and the evidence of regeneration; for everyone that truly loves is born of God.

True love for others springs from a genuine heart love for God in which he holds the supremacy and the preeminence. Carnal love stops when the relationship, the attraction, or the favor stops. This is only self-love! But, when a person loves the Lord, he loves all who belong to Christ and will never cease to love him or them!

The Evidence of Your Faith

Continuing in faith is not a condition of salvation but rather an evidence or proof of true faith; even as trials, which are God-given, do not produce faith but reveal faith, separating the false from the true. Like precious metal, faith is not destroyed by the fire; it increases in value and strength.

Sin is Never a Small Thing

In a strict sense there is no “little sin” because there is no little God to sin against.

Finished

The life of the Old Testament Jew was very difficult. He was hedged in by a thousand commandments and prohibitions. The forms, laws, ceremonies, and sacrifices were many, their details all minutely arranged. He was always in danger of making himself unclean. If he sat on a certain stool, drank from a certain pitcher, ate a certain food, touched a leper, or did a certain deed, he was defiled. A thousand sins of ignorance were like hidden pits before him. He must live in constant fear of being cut off. No Jew ever talked of a finished work!

The bullock was offered, but there must be another. The lamb was slain, but there must be another. The atonement was made, but there must be another. The High Priest went into the holiest, but he must go again.

But look at our Priest, Sacrifice, and Atonement in Christ—“It is finished.” Look at our position—“Complete in him.” Look at our rest—His rest.

A New Creature

The Apostle said, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” The grace of God and love for Christ throbs in a man’s pulse; it looks out of his eyes; it lights up his countenance; it softens his touch; it mellows his voice; it bows his head; it bends his knee; it opens his hand; it curbs his tongue; it humbles his heart; it orders his steps; it gives him a hearing ear, a forgiving spirit, and a lasting peace.

Who, but God, can accomplish such a work? We are indeed his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works!

The Privilege of Supporting Missionaries

For these traveling missionaries have gone for his sake and are accepting nothing from the heathen. So we ourselves ought to support such people, to welcome and provide for them, in order that we be fellow-workers in the truth.

3 John 7-8, Amplified Version

It is a great privilege to preach the gospel of God's glory and an equal privilege and blessing to provide for those who preach it; for, in so doing, we also minister the gospel. It is beyond my comprehension that any believer would not welcome the opportunity to help a missionary and his family, when such sacrifice on their part is involved.

Divine Healing

All healing of spiritual sickness or natural sickness is of God. The healing of natural sickness is never accomplished without the power of God. Vain are the skills of the most learned physician if God is not pleased to heal; and, if he is pleased to heal, he can do so with or without the medicine or the physician.

Trials, trouble, and illnesses are a part of this flesh and this world! God has never promised his people freedom from the infirmities and afflictions of the flesh, but he has promised his sufficient grace for every trial. "My grace is sufficient for thee." "In the world ye shall have tribulations, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

When a believer is sick, it is not "of the devil," nor is it from "lack of faith." As in all our experiences, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord," and we can be sure that this, too, shall be for his glory and our good (Rom. 8:28).

If you know and love the Lord Jesus and he is pleased to bring affliction into your life, treat it the same as you would any other trial. Pray and seek the prayers of other believers for your deliverance. Do not seek the aid of religious healers. If a man preaches "another gospel" and "another Jesus," he has "another spirit." Use whatever means and medicine you have available and wait upon the Lord. "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:18).

May God be pleased to bless you with health of body, but more important is the perfect cleansing and healing of our souls in Christ Jesus.

Teach in Love

For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

James 1:20

Someone said, “We have listened to the preacher; truth by him has now been shown. But we need a greater teacher from the everlasting throne. Application is the work of God alone.”

Our tirades, denunciations, arguments, and demands will never change one heart, bring one sinner to Christ, nor motivate one believer to greater commitment and service. It is still and always has been, “The love of Christ that constraineth me,” and “The servant of the Lord must not strive [be quarrelsome] but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Tim. 2:24).

Pray for Us!

Pray for those who minister the word! The work of the ministry of the gospel is so important and you have such a concern in it that you ought to be moved to pray that God will give the pastor and the elders his word for the church. If the preacher is blessed, the people will be blessed. If he is not anointed by the Spirit, the people will suffer.

“I trust,” Paul said, “that as a minister of the gospel I am faithfully preaching the word of God without regard to the favors or frowns of men, as a good steward of the grace of God” (Acts 20:25-27).

Brethren, pray for us! We are not sufficient for these things.

3 Reasons our Lord had to Become a Man

It was necessary for our Lord to become a man; for unless he was a man:

1. He could not be a High Priest to offer sacrifice for sin and make intercession, for the High Priest was taken from among men (Heb. 5:1);
2. He would have no sacrifice to offer, for he must die and shed his blood (Heb. 9:11-12);
3. He could not be a faithful mediator with a perfect righteousness to plead (Rom. 5:19).

A Better Testament

Believers in Old Testament days had Christ in promise; we have Christ himself! They had Christ in type; we have him in reality! They believed and were saved by looking to him who was to come; we believe and are saved by him who has come! They were justified and perfected, not in the law, but in Jesus Christ. And so they were not made perfect without us nor we without them, for all believers in all dispensations are one church and general assembly!

Our Pattern of Confession

We do not give altar calls and invitations at the close of the service nor pressure men and women to unite with this church. We preach the gospel and in it call upon people to come to Christ in their hearts.

We do, however, believe that the pattern and command of the New Testament is to publicly confess the Lord in baptism and to identify with his people. If God has been pleased through the preaching of the gospel of Christ to reveal Christ in your heart and enabled you to believe on him for all your salvation and you would like to be baptized or unite with us, please inform me.

The Taming of the Tongue

The tongue, when moved by anger, envy, jealousy, ambition, and like passions, is like a destructive, spreading FIRE which destroys without partiality or pity.

1. It is like a fire in the heat of it, stirring passions like water boiling.
2. It is like a fire in the danger of it; no one in its path is safe. It can turn a happy home or a church into a barren wilderness.
3. It is like a fire in the duration of it; a fire out of control is hard to stop, and words spoken in anger live on and on.

This small member can destroy friendships that have stood for years. It can destroy homes and churches that have been happy and content. It can destroy character and reputations, plant suspicion and doubt, and turn men from truth to error.

Men have succeeded in taming beasts, birds, serpents, and even the fish of the sea; “but the tongue,” James said, “can no man tame.” That’s

true! No man can tame the tongue; but the grace of God can tame it, subdue it, and even make it an instrument for God's praise and glory.

When the grace of God acts on the heart, it will subdue the tongue. Grace slays the corruption which uses the tongue as an outlet. Grace quenches the flames of hate and envy which motivate the tongue. Grace implants a new nature of love which influences the tongue to speak in kindness, truth, and sincerity for the glory of God and the good of the hearer.

The First and the Last Adam

As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

I Corinthians 15:22

The first man, Adam, was the representative, the covenant and federal head, of all men. We all lived in him, and we all died in him when he sinned (Rom. 5:15). Sin, disease, physical death, and eternal death came upon us through Adam's disobedience.

So too is Christ the representative, the covenant and federal head, of the elect. And because he became a man, obeyed the law of God perfectly, died for our sins, and rose again, in him we have righteousness, redemption, and eternal life (Rom. 5:17-19).

All who were "in Adam" die. All who are "in Christ" shall live.

The Name of the Lord

Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Romans 10:13

This is quoted by Paul from Joel 2:32. The name of the Lord signified the Lord himself. His name reveals who he is, what he has done, why he did it, and where he is now! And none other name can save (Phil. 2:9-11).

Jehovah-Jireh—the Lord will provide (Gen. 22:13-14).

Jehovah-Rapha—the Lord that healeth (Ex. 15:26).

Jehovah-Nissi—The Lord our banner (Ex. 17:8-15).

Jehovah-Shalom—The Lord our peace (Judges 6:24).

Jehovah-Ra-ah—The Lord my shepherd (Ps. 23:1).

Jehovah-Tsidkenu—The Lord our righteousness (Jer. 23:6).

Jehovah-Shammah—The Lord is present (Ez. 48:35).

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

When Martha said, “I know that my brother shall rise again in the resurrection,” the Lord replied, “I AM the resurrection and the life.” He is the source, cause, and fountain of eternal life, hence the cause of resurrection. In him dwells all the full, blessed life of God. We live because we are in him.

Resurrection and life is not only an experience that Christ purchased and bestows, but he is our life. Because he lives, we live! We can no more die than Christ can die. The Lord turned Martha’s thought from doctrine to himself!

Oh, that God would do that for all to whom I preach. We can have the doctrine and not have Christ, the life; but, if we have Christ, we will know and love the doctrine.

Ambassadors of Christ

When questions arise concerning preachers—their conduct, conversation, attitude, attire, and message—one scripture comes to my mind. “Now then we are ambassadors of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:20).

We are the “highest ranking representative appointed by our king to represent him to others.” That is an ambassador! This grave responsibility and high office, when realized, will spell out for any man the answers to the above questions.

The Preacher’s Task

Our work has about it a joy and delight that even the angels might envy; but, at the same time, it has a sorrow and burden that I do not enjoy, nor do I understand why any man would covet it. To preach the gospel of my Lord and Master and to tell others of the good hope we have through his grace is “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” But there is the burden of the word of God and the response of men which renders us “insufficient for these things.”

1. In preparing to preach, the subject, topic, and text must be revealed.
2. In preparing and preaching, the heart of the preacher must be conditioned for such a task.
3. In the pulpit, fear and anxieties flood the preacher as he realizes what an awesome position and responsibility are his.

4. When the sermon is ended, and men and women depart to spend eternity in either heaven or hell, depending on whether they have heard and believed or have not heard our gospel, makes us cry with Moses, “Lord, if you go not with us, don’t let us go” into the pulpit.

Brethren, the very least you can do for those who are called to the task of preaching the word is to pray for us!

Walk in Love

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Ephesians 5:2

Here is the key to all that is commanded, expected, and needed for godliness and sanctification.

1. Walk in love to God our Father, who has given us all things in Christ.
2. Walk in love to Christ for the love he has for us, the relationship we have with him, and the things he has done for us.
3. Walk in love one to another.

Our example of love is Christ our Lord, who loved us and gave himself for us. If Christ so loved us, we ought also to love one another. This principle of love is the gift of God and is sufficient motivation for mercy, forgiveness, kindness, and all godliness.

Our Lord asked, “Peter, do you love me?” “Yea, Lord!” “Then feed my sheep!”

Come to Christ, Not an Altar

The “invitation”—or “altar call”—at the end of a service has become such an accepted tradition in today’s religion that those who do not sing an “invitation hymn” and invite people to the front of the church to “get saved” are branded with all sorts of names and charges.

It never seems to trouble religious people that this “altar call” is nowhere to be found in God’s Word; that the great majority of those who “come forward” usually “go back” into indifference and worldliness; that coming to Christ is not a physical move at all but a heart commitment to

the Redeemer; that the Scripture presents baptism as our public confession of Christ, not “shaking the preacher’s hand”; that the gospel is a command to repent, believe, and follow the Lord in baptism, not a mere invitation. The King of kings does not invite his subjects to obey and believe him— He commands them!

I preach to you the word of the living God! In the preaching of his word the holiness, justice, and righteousness of God are declared. The truth of our fall, sinfulness, and inability is clearly set forth, as is the grace and mercy of God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Are you a sinner? Confess that fact before God, not before me! Do you believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer and righteousness and sin-offering for one such as you? Then settle that issue before the throne of grace, not at the front of the church! Has God spoken peace to your heart in Christ? Do you now rest in him alone as your Lord and Saviour, your High Priest, and Mediator? Is the old man crucified with Christ, buried, and you are risen in him a new creature? Then ask the pastor to assist you in believer’s baptism that you may declare publicly what God has done for you personally!

From Such Withdraw Yourself

Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself.

1 Timothy 6:5

Withdraw yourselves from men who are contentious and quarrelsome, who are always disputing and debating over words, laws, and personalities. Their ministry produces envy and jealousy, quarrels and dissension, slander and evil suspicions.

The true grace of God promotes peace in the church and in the home.

Proof the Promise is True

The Lord God has declared that he will show mercy, that he will redeem and glorify a people, and that heaven will be populated with a holy people like his beloved Son. Among all of the evidences that this promise is true, the greatest proof is, “He spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all.”

From Death to Life Eternal

For me to live is Christ; and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:21

My Lord Jesus is the giver of life. He is the sum and substance of life. He is my hope of life eternal. My hope is to see him, to be like him, and to be with him forever. Therefore, for me “to die is gain.” I will be released from age and pain and gain a perfect body; I will be free from this sinful flesh and gain sinless perfection; I will be free from every trial, every heartache, and live in perfect rest and joy; I will enjoy perfect knowledge, immortality, and everlasting peace. Gain is a weak word to describe such glory!

What is it then that makes us so fearful of death and so reluctant to part with this world? We may give a lot of reasons and feel that we are sincere and our reasons valid; but, to be perfectly honest, our problem is the weakness of our faith in him and his Word. Our Lord said, “O ye of little faith, wherein do you doubt?”

Wherein do we doubt? His love for sinners? He gave himself for us! The efficacy of his blood? It cleanseth us from all sin! The reality of heaven? “If it were not so, I would have told you!” The awesome miracle of being changed from the image of the earthy to the image of the heavenly. Is anything too hard for God? Here is where Abraham found righteousness. “He believed God and was persuaded that what God had promised, he was able also to perform!” Life eternal in Christ for those who believe is what he has promised, and he will perform! “Sirs, I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.”

Welcome death, for with death comes life eternal!

Religion Without Love

Beloved, let us love, for love is of God. In God alone love has its true abode. Beloved, let us love, for those who love are truly his sons born from above. Beloved, let us love, for love is rest, and he who loveth not remains unblest!

Religion without love is like a body without life; it is offensive and needs to be buried from sight. Religion without love is like a contaminated well which should bear the sign, “Do not drink.” Religion without love is a house built on sand, a branch which bears no fruit, a cloak of hypocrisy

covering an unregenerate heart, and a form of godliness which denies the power!

From Nothing, Everything

The preacher often says, “Mine is a very hard task, for I preach to many in whom I see nothing hopeful. I thunder forth the law, and the conscience is not stirred. I talk of the love and mercy of God, and the heart is not moved. I preach the sufferings of Christ for our sins, and the eye does not weep. I point to hell, and there is no fear, nor is there any desire kindled when I speak of the glory of heaven. There is absolutely nothing in men that encourages me to continue to preach to them. Is there any reason why I should preach the word to those in whom I see nothing?”

Brother, come back with me to the world’s creation. Of what did God make the world? Did he not make it out of nothing? You have never yet grasped the idea of nothing until you consider the creation. When God spoke, there was no ear to hear. When he said, “Let there be light,” there was no eye to see it. When he made the rose, there was no nose to smell it. When he made the apple, there was no mouth to taste it. And when he made the garden, there was no foot to walk in it.

Nothing was everywhere, and yet out of nothing he made all things. He spoke, and it was done. He commanded, and it appeared. You say there is nothing in the sinner to whom you preach? That’s wonderful, for there is in that state of nothing room for the great God to create something! Inasmuch as the heart of man is empty and the soul is dark, the conditions are right for God to create a new heart and a right spirit and put his grace where there was no grace.

If you had to convert the sinner, then I would agree that your task is hopeless; but, if salvation is of the Lord, you may comfort your heart with this thought; that he who created all this marvelous earth out of nothing can also create life, love, faith, and hope where there are no spiritual ingredients nor interest with which to work.

Remain Faithful

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

I Corinthians 4:2

I give thanks continually for all of you in this assembly. Your faith, fellowship, support, and participation in this ministry that God has given to us are so encouraging to me that I do not have words to express my gratitude. God has been so good to us to allow us to minister the gospel to so many through television, tapes, books, missionaries, and our own elders. “Brethren, let us pray for one another” and each remain faithful in his calling. God will honor those who honor him.

A Comment on Galatians 4:19

“My little children.” Paul speaks to the Galatians most affectionately as a father to his children. They were sons of God but still babes in Christ; consequently, the term “little children” was appropriate.

“Of whom I travail in birth again.” Paul compares himself to a woman with child. All of his pains, sufferings, and labors in the ministry of the gospel he compares to the sorrows of a woman during the time of child-bearing. The woman is concerned, dedicated, and involved in one purpose—and that is to bring forth a living child. The Apostle was just as concerned, dedicated, and involved in prayer and preaching that the life of Christ might be formed in those to whom he preached.

“Until Christ be formed in you.” Salvation and eternal life is not in a form of religion, a system of theology, or an outward morality. Eternal life is to know the living God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. It is to have the life of Christ, the presence of Christ, the Spirit and mind of Christ, and the very glory of Christ begotten, created, and formed in us. Christ in you is the hope of glory. Until the miracle of grace is performed, our religion is but a form of godliness.

This is the object of our ministry here at 13th Street; “to win Christ and be found in him, to know him and the power of his resurrected life.” May the Lord deliver us from the philosophies and traditions of men and form Christ in our hearts!

“Here, O my soul, thy trust repose,
If Jesus, the indwelling Christ, is mine;
Not death itself, that last of foes,
Shall break a union so divine.”

Take Heed of Who and What You Hear

You will never be filled with grace, nor grow in grace, if you care not whom you hear nor what you hear. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Misery awaits the man who builds his hope on anything other than God’s Word!

A Love That Overcomes

Now abideth faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love.

I Corinthians 13:13

Nothing will avail to bring us together to overcome our natural envy, jealousy, and misunderstanding if love is missing. “Love believeth all things, beareth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things. Love never fails.” Brethren, let us love one another, for love is of God.

Unity

Let us not set ourselves up as critics and judges of the conduct and lives of other believers. Let us not spend our time finding fault with one another, picking out weaknesses and exaggerating differences of opinion and practice. Rather, let us spend our time endeavoring to help one another and to avoid doing and saying things that may cause others to stumble.

We can do this by making our fellowship to be in Christ (not in form and traditions), by loving one another in spite of differences, and by avoiding collisions on the points wherein we differ. I am not suggesting for a moment that we compromise the gospel or the fundamentals of our faith; but, as there are no two snowflakes exactly alike, there are no two people exactly alike; therefore, the foundation of our fellowship is our love for Christ and our love for one another, not perfect agreement on every point.

The fact of the matter is that I do not agree or approve of all that I do, think, and say! “Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.” By God’s grace, I intend to love and encourage every believer in Christ, our sovereign Lord. I shall endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit of God in the bond of peace for the glory of our Lord, the well-being of his church, and the witness of the gospel.

Speak and Act from the Heart

There is nothing more dishonoring to God nor a greater denial of the very character of God than for us (in his name) to pretend to be what we are not, to use words in prayer or praise that are not from the heart, or to do our works for the applause and the admiration of men. Let us believe, love, and worship God without trying to feel, sound, or appear to be religious! Our Lord looks on the heart, not on the outward appearance.

Genuine Love

Love for Christ Jesus and love for one another is all we need! If these two things are present in and among us, then we have not labored in vain and we shall rejoice together, both here and in eternal glory. This love is not doctrinal, constrained, nor pretended. It is genuine, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, without which no man is saved (1 Jn. 4:7-10).

A Good Hope Through Grace

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who hath loved us, hath given us a good hope through grace.

2 Thessalonians 2:16

I have a hope of eternal life and eternal glory. It is a “living hope” because my Lord Jesus lives! As my surety and substitute “He lives, and was dead, and behold he is alive forevermore.” “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.”

My hope is a “good hope” because the Lord Jesus and the Father gave it to me through grace. I did not earn it nor deserve it by my works. It is the free gift of his love and mercy in Christ. If my merit or works enter in at any point, it would not be a good hope. Therefore, if I am asked a

reason for my hope, I would ground my reply in the three foundations of the Great Reformation.

1. The scriptures alone—I believe the word of God! I cannot trust my feelings, my thoughts, nor my experiences; but, I can rest my soul on his Word.
2. Grace alone—Salvation is by God’s free and sovereign grace from its origination to its consummation. All that I am, have, know, or shall ever be is the gift of God to me. “A beggar poor, at mercy’s door, lies such a wretch as I.”
3. Christ alone—“I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.” If I have believed and trusted Christ alone, then I am sure that the Father will put forth all his power to preserve me, that his Son be not dishonored.

This is indeed a good hope through grace.

The Blessed Formula of Spiritual Maturity

How can we expect God to honor and bless our words or deeds until we learn in our hearts the blessed formula of spiritual maturity, “Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17), and “Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:30)?

My gifts, my witness, my prayers, my conversation, my writings, my preaching, and my singing are all so much flesh, froth, and foolishness unless my motive is his glory and my claim for approval is “in his name.” It has been proven countless times that success in religion requires only a doctrine, a mouth, and some natural talents. But the power and presence of God is only in the name of and for the glory of his dear son!

The Righteousness of God

What do you know about the righteousness of God? Not only his personal and essential righteousness, but the righteousness and holiness he requires of all who would see the Lord, and the righteousness he has purchased and provided for them? I can show you from the Scriptures the awful and awesome importance of the subject.

Jeremiah 23:5-6—The very name of our Redeemer is “the righteousness of God.”

Romans 1:16-17—The heart and essence of the gospel is to reveal the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:20-21—Our Lord’s being made sin and dying on the cross for us was in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in him

Romans 10:1-4—The Apostle pronounces all religious people unsaved who are ignorant of the righteousness of God and who are seeking to establish their own righteousness.

Matthew 5:20—Our Lord declares that a person will not enter into the kingdom of God unless he has a righteousness that exceeds any holiness produced by the best man on earth. This righteousness is the righteousness of God which is by the obedience, faithfulness, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Christ Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.”

Our Attitude and Conduct as Believers

Nothing reveals the true state of my heart, my relationship with God, and my understanding of the gospel quite like my daily, general attitude toward others, toward God’s providence, and toward my lot in life. It is one thing to be discouraged occasionally, to get upset, to disagree with someone, to feel neglected, or even to withdraw for a time to reflect on the matters at hand. But it is quite another thing to continue in a negative attitude, pouting and feeling sorry for myself, neglecting to exhort and encourage others, and showing by my countenance and conduct that I am not happy with the way things are.

“Let not the sun go down on thy wrath,” clearly teaches that we are not to allow wrath, misunderstanding, nor bad feelings to continue! Let it be over when the day is over. Forgive as you are forgiven and give of yourself to make this difficult journey easier for others. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a family working together, living together, and functioning as one body for the glory of God and the good of the whole. It is very important that every member of that body be in harmony. I believe if a member is in harmony with the head, he will certainly be in harmony with the rest of the body. Christ is not divided! “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

The Happy Truth of Humility

In Christ there is no great and small, no important and unimportant, but only sinners saved by the grace of God. We are all brethren! The servant is

not greater than his Lord; and if the Lord humbled himself to become a servant, shall we not do likewise? Happy are those who know this gracious truth by experience and perform the doing of it.

Proof and Evidence of Our Discipleship

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

John 15:8

When believers walk in truth and love, when they adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour with generous, gracious, and exemplary lives and behavior, they glorify God. The fruit of righteousness, by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, displayed by a believer, not only glorifies the power, grace, and mercy of God in them, but causes others to glorify God.

“So shall ye be my disciples.” Our obedience and fruitfulness do not make us disciples of Christ but are proof and evidence that we are his disciples. Good fruit does not make a tree good; the tree is first good and the fruit is evidence that the tree is good.

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1989

A New Year

Someone said, “No one ever regarded the first of January with indifference.” It is a special time, for it is the beginning of a new year. I think a good prayer comes from an unknown author:

“Let me be a little kinder,
Let me be a little blinder
To the faults of those about me;
And let me praise thee a whole lot more.”

Leave Them There

I know my sins, but I rejoice in his grace. I know my weakness, but I rest in his strength. I know my emptiness, but I am complete in him. “O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,” all because we do not cast our sins, our souls, on Christ and leave them there!

Our Attitude Towards Aging

An elderly lady who bore her years remarkably well (as so many of you do) was asked by a child if she were young or old. “My dear,” she replied, “I have been young a very long time.” I suppose much of this business of old or young is in the attitude, don’t you think? “So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Ps. 103:5).

The Vanity of This Life

The hope of ever finding anything on this earth which can actually give me fulfillment, contentment, or satisfaction has long ago passed away. I have not, like Solomon, tried it all to the extent to which he did; but, what I have seen, heard, and experienced of this world, I have found to be

vanity. I shall rest and hope in Christ and know that I shall be satisfied when I awake in his likeness.

A Word of Caution on Quitting

It is obvious from the Scriptures that our Lord uses men and means to preach the gospel, feed his sheep, and accomplish his purposes. Great care and prayer, therefore, should be employed before we identify or unite with any man or church. But, having done so in the belief that God is among them, even greater consideration and time should be given before we leave; for laying down the banner of Christ in time of trial is a serious matter in God's sight. It may never be ours to carry again.

Flee from Idols

Hezekiah broke in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made, for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it; Hezekiah called it a piece of brass.

2 Kings 18:4

Can you imagine the shock and horror experienced by those superstitious and religious people when the king destroyed this sacred relic—the serpent which Moses had made? I'm sure that we would get the same reaction from most religious people today if we took a bulldozer and leveled Mt. Calvary outside of old Jerusalem, if we dynamited the tomb which they claim is Jesus' tomb, or if we dammed up the river Jordan and made a lake for fisherman, or if we destroyed all of the pictures of Jesus, all of the crosses, and turned Bethlehem into a shopping mall.

Yet, this is what men would do if they really knew and believed that God is Spirit and is worshipped in Spirit and in truth; that God dwells not in temples nor tombs; that God is not worshipped with men's hands, holy places, nor religious visual aids. To know Christ, to trust Christ, to rest in Christ alone, and to worship God in the heart is to be separated from all fleshly, material, and earthly idols, no matter what purpose they may have served in God's plan to send, reveal, and make known the Redeemer—Christ Jesus.

I include also such objects of awe and reverence as the ark of the covenant, the priesthood, the blessed virgin, the apostles, and even the original scriptures, if they could be found. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only!

The First and Second Man

Adam is a type (in reverse) of Christ. The only way that Adam typified Christ was as the head of a race. The remainder of the comparison is the opposite (1 Cor. 15:45-49).

The First Adam (man)	The second Adam (man)
A living soul	A quickening spirit
Of the earth	Lord from heaven
Made sinners in him	Made righteous in him
Death in him	Life in him

Effects of the Grace of God

The grace of God makes all men who feel its power to be brethren! We are one family in Christ.

Grace makes the prosperous give his hand and help to the poor. Grace makes the healthy to reach out and care for the weak and sickly. Grace makes the learned and the intellectual to stoop from their so-called dignity and embrace the ignorant and the unlettered. Grace makes the important to be polite and considerate of the lesser. Grace makes the elder to be understanding and patient with the impulsive youth. Grace makes the offended to forgive the offender and to forget the offense.

Let the grace of God lay hold of a man's heart and pride, envy, and bitterness go to their graves!

All We Need

Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.

Hebrews 9:6-7

Do you see in this scripture the three essentials (in type and pattern) for worship and acceptance and atonement before the living God? The tabernacle with its mercy seat, the high priest, and the blood sacrifice.

Now watch the fulfillment of these patterns by Christ our Lord.

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:11-12).

Christ Jesus is our tabernacle (He tabernacled among us), our High Priest, and our mercy-seat and sacrifice. By him we sinners come to the Holy God with boldness and full assurance –“For no sinner shall ever be empty sent back, Who comes seeking mercy for Christ Jesus’ sake.”

Faithful Believers

Oh, how I thank God for faithful believers who have learned the gospel of Christ and have not moved from that place or from this place; but, by their loyalty to Christ and to his Word, have helped to establish a testimony of truth which is used of God in many places.

Faith and Works

James wrote, “Suppose a brother or a sister is in need, without proper clothes, and has nothing to eat, and you say to him, “Goodbye, keep yourself warm and well-fed,” yet you do not give him any clothes nor food. What good have you done him?”

Will your words warm him? Will your words feed him? Of course not! A man is foolish to think that words alone can profit a man in need. In the same way, foolish is the man who thinks that words of religion can take the place of works of faith.

Works without faith are dead works, but faith without works is dead faith. Good works do necessarily flow from a life of faith in Christ, and the absence of good works is certain proof of the absence of faith.

Are You Resting in Christ?

How can I know that I am resting in the righteousness and blood of Christ? Perhaps these questions will help.

1. Has the holiness of God slain you, shut your mouth and destroyed your own works and righteousness? Are your righteousnesses really filthy rags?

2. Death and judgement await. In what and whom do you find your hope of justification and acceptance? Where will you stand at God's tribunal? Only Christ enables God to be just and justifier.

3. What is your attitude toward the word of God and the commandments of Christ? True believers love God's law and delight to do his will.

4. When your conscience is bleeding and your heart is broken because of the guilt of your thoughts and words, the coldness of your heart, and too much concern for this world, where and to whom do you run for relief, for peace and help? Some run to a profession, to works, to a preacher, or to the altar to rededicate; but, the believer runs to Christ.

“When I look toward the majesty of God,
When I look to the judgement throne,
When I look at the sinfulness of my nature
And the innumerable evils that are my own,

“There is no one to whom I can go;
For words of peace and life are in Christ alone;
Blessed Lord, I find in thee all I need;
I find in thee full righteousness and blood to atone!”

The Wisdom of This World

*The Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom,
but we preach Christ crucified.*

1 Corinthians 1:22-23

It is the same today—men want clever preachers, not Christ preachers; reason, not revelation, their minds challenged, not their hearts pricked. The wisdom of this world says, “If you wish to reach the people of this day, you must not be dogmatic; share, discuss, exchange ideas, and counsel people; don't preach!” I hear people say, “If you would enlist today's youth, you must adapt to their lifestyle and their language; pick up the rock beat, use comedy, puppets, and social entertainment; don't preach to them!” Others insist that, “If you would win the support and interest of people of education, influence, and wealth, you must curb your Calvinism, soften your stand on substitution, and don't preach Christ to them!”

Can you imagine the Apostle Paul compromising with this so-called “wisdom of the world”? *No!* His reply to what men require and seek is,

“We preach Christ and him crucified.” I desire to reach, enlist, and minister to young and old, wise and unwise, but not at the expense of God’s glory and truth! “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21); and if depravity offends men’s dignity, revelation offends their wisdom, and substitution offends their pride, so be it!

I find God’s prophets, apostles, and preachers, who have been used of God in past years, to be compassionate men but never compromisers, to be comforters, but never cowards. They were willing to take the offense out of their manners, but never out of their message. They all preached Christ and him crucified!

Letter from a Listener

I received a letter from a television listener in West Virginia which had an interesting paragraph. I share it with you:

“Christ did not say, “If you want to go to heaven, keep my commandments,” or, “If you want to keep out of hell, keep my commandments;” rather, he said, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” Apparently, religion today cannot comprehend a gift of eternal life in Christ that constrains us to walk in his word and commandments because we love him. I asked a preacher recently, “Why don’t you teach obedience to Jesus Christ by love instead of fear?” He replied, “It won’t work!”

The Character of a Witness

To follow godliness without sound doctrine will lead to wildfire and zeal without direction. But to follow doctrine without grace and Godliness will lead to dead orthodoxy. In trying to avoid one ditch, let us not forget that there is a ditch on the other side of the road; and sometimes the champions of “the cause of God and truth” fall into errors of spirit and attitude!

Let us contend for truth without being contentious. A man can be orthodox without being obnoxious! Let us lift up “the way” while we encourage the wayfarers. Let us preach with patience, witness in love, and “not strive, but be gentle unto all men” (2 Tim. 2:24).

I can tell a man what the gospel has done *for* me while I show him what the gospel has done *in* me. This is called “adorning the doctrine of God, our Saviour.”

The Body of Christ

The apostle illustrates the union of believers by the human body. The human body is one, but it has many members; and each member is placed where it is in proportion to all the others for the good of the whole body. The eye sees, but it does not hear. The ear hears, but it does not breathe. So, we are one body in Christ and are in a union together, having gifts and abilities differing but all serving the same purpose—the good of the body and the glory of Christ.

Letter from a Friend

“What a great help your sermons and commentaries are to me! I can surely remember when I wasn’t this interested, but now I get such a blessing and joy out of hearing and reading God’s Word; and, the more I read and listen, the more I understand and the more precious it becomes.

“When some of my family members and friends don’t seem to be interested or don’t understand, I remember how long it took me; and I know if they are his sheep that they will hear the effectual call to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ through the preaching of the gospel.”

What an excellent lesson for all of us to learn when we are tempted to be a bit impatient and hard in preaching and witnessing! “Salvation is of the Lord.”

The Means of Salvation

Those who are elected to life in Christ shall be saved (Jn. 6:37-40), but they shall be brought to repentance and faith by the means which God has appointed (2 Thess. 2:13; Mk. 16:15-16; 1 Cor. 1:21). It is on this ground that Paul wrote 2 Timothy 2:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:19-21. A belief in sovereign grace that destroys prayer for sinners, evangelistic and missionary zeal, and a sincere invitation to all men to bow to the claims of Christ and receive him as Lord and Saviour, is not of the Lord and is false doctrine!

The Lord’s Orchestra in Concert

Our Lord has been pleased to call out a people for his glory all over our country and the world. And in these assemblies of believers our Lord has

raised up men to preach, pastor, and teach his Word. They are all earthen vessels, each with different personalities, gifts, talents, and experience; but, they do all have one thing in common—they love Christ and preach his gospel of grace.

Therefore, I pray for them, love them, and desire to encourage them in every way that I can. It is an awesome responsibility to preach the word and pastor God's flock. "Who is sufficient for these things?" We are his orchestra in concert, not in competition. And when we work together, sing in harmony, and take our own parts conscientiously, the music of the gospel and the fellowship of believers is sweet to the ear and heart. But, when we leave our chair and charge, which the Master Conductor gave to us only, and begin to tell another what to play and how to play his part, we do not fulfill our role and we also hinder him in his.

Peter pointed out to John and said, "What shall this man do?" Our Lord said, "What I have for him to do is no concern of yours—you follow me!"

The Foolishness of Preaching

However strange it may seem to us, it is by the foolishness of preaching that God is pleased to save them that believe. And the power of God goes with that plain, direct declaration of the gospel of Christ. It is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation, not eloquence, logic, nor human zeal.

May God give us his Spirit and the courage to declare in plain terms the truth of his Word.

Do We Really Know God?

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Romans 10:1-4

Paul acknowledged that these Jews had a zeal for God but also that they really did not know God, for 1.) they were ignorant of God's righteousness and 2.) they were trying to find favor with God on the basis of their own righteousness.

A man who is ignorant of God's essential holiness and the immaculate holiness which he has promised and provided sinners in Christ does not know God. A man who attempts to come into the presence of God or find acceptance and favor with God on the basis of his own works and righteousness reveals that he does not know the true and living God.

Those who really know God have, like Isaiah, seen God in his holiness, seen themselves in their uncleanness, and have looked only to Christ as their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. It would do well for us to read these verses here in Romans and those verses which follow until, by his grace, we can say:

“Before the holy throne of God
I have a perfect plea;
Jesus Christ obeyed his law
And paid the debt for me.”

The Law

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:19-20

The law which speaks here is the moral law of God as it appears in the whole word of God, which every man is bound to observe and obey, whether Jew or Gentile. All mankind is under God's law. And this law pronounces every son of Adam guilty and stops every mouth. We have no defense, no alibi, and nothing to reply; for the holy law of God exposes our corruption, both inwardly and outwardly.

Therefore, this is the apostle's conclusion: the law cannot save, it cannot justify, and it cannot give us a righteousness. It can only do three things: 1.) shut our mouths and declare us guilty before God, 2.) teach us the depths and darkness of our sin and depravity, and 3.) shut us up to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 7:7-11).

Six Exhortations

In 1 Peter 4:7-13, the Apostle declares, "The end of all things is at hand." Life draws to a close; therefore he exhorts us to 1.) be serious-minded and call upon God, 2.) above all things have genuine love among yourselves, 3.) be generous and hospitable to one another without complaining, 4.) use the gifts God has given you to glorify him and serve the church as a good steward of grace, 5.) think it not unusual and strange when you have trials and tribulations, and 6.) rejoice in the Lord.

True Character

The believer will, in truth, love all men. There is no room in a regenerate heart for hate, grudges, nor bigotry; but there is a special love for those who are called brethren. The word is "love one another as members of the same family, giving precedence and honour to one another" (Phil. 2:3-4; Gal. 6:10).

In making others happy, we find happiness. In giving, we receive. In prompting another's welfare and honour, we are honoured. A man's character is not always revealed in what others say about him, but in what he says privately about others.

The Most Important Question

It is a tragedy that sensationalism will draw a religious crowd while substitution goes begging for an audience. But the true church of Christ will preach to prepare men to meet God, not to meet the arguments and obstacles of unusual religionists. "What think ye of Christ" is still the question?

Humility

"A proud look" is listed first among seven things God hates. Where is pride to be reckoned with? Where is humility taught? At the cross! "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ, who humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Remember his Mercies

When we are tempted to complain about our Lord's chastening's, let us remember his mercies! "He hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."

Real Trials

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you.

1 Peter 4:12

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into different trials; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience.

James 1:2-3

David said, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.” Martin Luther declared, “I never knew the true meaning of God’s word until I came into affliction. I have always found trials to be the best schoolmaster.”

1. Real trials touch us personally—our flesh, our hearts, our homes, our children! This is not something we read about concerning others and then offer high-blown advice, but something we experience.
2. Real trials go to the root of the matter and reveals the truth of our nature. It shows whether repentance, faith, love for Christ, and confidence in his purpose and providence are realities or whether they are pretense. Trials do not produce faith; rather, they either reveal the faith that is there or they reveal sham and hypocrisy.
3. Real trials tests a man’s graces. We talk of love for one another, but not until real trials come can we be sure that we do love. We talk of forgiveness and mercy, but not until forgiveness is needed and mercy is required can we be sure that we have it to give! Some of the best religious “talkers” are the poorest “doers” when it comes to putting their theology into practice.
4. Real trials gives us an opportunity to minister to others: first, by equipping us with necessary abilities. None can enter into a brother’s sorrow like one who has actually been in the same situation. Second, by bringing us to the brother’s side at this particular time. “I’m sorry that you are burdened in such a way, but I rejoice that the Lord affords me the opportunity and privilege of helping you bear your burden.”

My brethren, don't fumble the opportunity to relieve the distressed, forgive the fallen, or feed the hungry. You just may not pass this way again. (Read immediately Matthew 25:41-46).

A Few Words of Comfort

Our Lord has been pleased to call away to glory several of our dear people. No words of mine can make these trials easier, dry your tears, nor dispel your loneliness; but, perhaps I can remind you of some things that we all believe and know, and these can serve as a foundation for comfort.

They are with Christ in glory! They would not come back here for a moment, even if they could.

They are perfect in body and soul! No more sin, no more pain, no more tears, no more sorrow! They are fully satisfied in his likeness (Ps. 17:15).

They have no unpleasant memories nor thoughts of earth! "For the former things are passed away; God makes all things new." There are neither regrets nor remorse in heaven.

They would not have you grieve for them, but rather rejoice in their graduation, promotion, and victory! To die is to gain and glory. Their trials and tribulations are over. Don't you wish that ours were?

There is no time in glory! Days and years have to do with us, not them. My son, Rob, did not go to glory 20 years ago; he went there today, and so will I! We will be glorified together.

They are gone for the present; and while memories of them are sweet and linger all of our lives, we have a life to live ourselves, our God to glorify, and others to serve and encourage. We cannot do this and live in the past. Paul said, "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before." I cannot do anything about what is behind me, but I can do much with what is before me—by the grace of God!

Fellowship

I thank God for your fellowship in the gospel. Not only do I thank God for you, but I pray his grace and peace to be with all of our brethren.

“May He, by whose kind grace we meet,
Send his great Spirit from above,
Make our communications sweet,

And cause our hearts to burn with love!”

Feed the Sheep

Peter was grieved when the Lord asked him the third time, “Lovest thou me?” It has been suggested that the Lord asked this question three times because Peter denied him three times. And I’m sure the memory of that incident added to Peter’s grief that the Lord should keep repeating this same question. At last, Peter appealed to the Lord’s complete knowledge of all things, of all men’s hearts and thoughts, and replied, “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.”

This is the vital issue and question of questions for all professed Christians: “Do you love Christ?” It is not, “Do you love the Word, the doctrine, the church, the law, the people of God?”—though you certainly will love them if you love Christ. But do you love him? This is where life and hope and grace are born—love for Christ (1 Cor. 16:22).

Again, the Lord said, “Feed my sheep.” It may be observed from the repetition of this phrase following Peter’s declaration of love for Christ that the only proper persons to feed the Lord’s sheep are those who truly love him! There are pretended shepherds who feed themselves and in time of trouble leave the flock, or who feed goats and not sheep, or who feed them not with the true bread. But since the work is so laborious, the opposition from the religious world so great, the reproach of the world so constant, and conflict with powers of darkness so real, only true lovers of Christ faithfully perform the work of feeding the sheep. They are faithful to preach and teach the word because they love Christ, they love the gospel of his grace, and they love his sheep. They also know that God will bless, honor, and prosper his preached word (Is. 55:11). They are motivated by Christ’s love for them and their love for him (2 Cor. 5:9-15).

The Lord Will Supply Our Needs

I was having supper at Bailey’s Cafeteria in Huntington, WV, last Monday and a television listener asked me, “How can you sell sermon tapes for \$2.00 and make anything?” I replied, “We can’t!”

The tape ministry, book ministry, and television ministry of our church are an effort on the part of our people and friends around here to preach the gospel of Christ, our Lord, to all who are interested. The Lord has and will meet every need “according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).

I am thankful to our Lord for the open doors and grateful to his people for their support.

The Believer's Epitaph

It used to be the custom to write an inscription on the tombstone of a departed loved one in memory of his life and faith.

On the tombstone of C.H. Spurgeon are these words:

“E’er since by faith I saw the stream,
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.”

On the tombstone of T.M. Martin, who preached during the days of the Civil War, are these words:

“A bondslave of Jesus Christ.”

I especially like the words inscribed on a tombstone in England: “till he comes.”

After a devastating flood in which many were killed, the body of a small boy was found. He was never claimed nor identified, so they buried him and wrote two words on his grave marker: “God knows.”

Job wrote his own epitaph. “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” He said, “Engrave this on the rock that marks my resting place.”

The Lord in Hebrews 11:13 wrote an epitaph for Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and all of the Old Testament believers: “These all died in faith.”

The Wonder of it All

I can appreciate the ability of the learned botanist to give me the scientific name of a rose, the origin of it, the various types, how and where they grow, and the number of petals, thorns, and leaves to expect on a genuine rose; but, too often, those who become overly entangled in these things somehow lose the most important things—the beauty and fragrance of the rose!

I hope in our teaching, preaching, and witnessing concerning the gospel of our dear Saviour we do not become more concerned with the system than the sweetness, with the mechanics rather than the mercy, with

the right terminology rather than the right spirit and attitude. You will soon weary my head if you don't warm my heart; and while I am eager to learn more of how, why, and when I got in Christ, I would like to rejoice and enjoy my relationship with Christ!

He is my Rose of Sharon which brightens my life and sends his sweet fragrance through my soul. One can preach about Christ and not preach Christ, just as one can know how God saves sinners and not be a saved sinner. "O the wonder of it all, just to think that Christ loves me."

The Sin unto Death

If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

1 John 5:16

John has been writing about prayer and encouraging believers to pray with confidence that God will hear us and grant those petitions that are according to his will. Those who have an interest at the throne of grace should make use of it for others, especially for weaker brothers and those overtaken with sin. We are encouraged to pray for the lost, to pray that God will save them (Rom. 10:1). But this verse is not concerning the lost but says if a brother (a born-again member of the Church) is observed to sin (as the best of men do in word, though, and deed) or falls into sin, we are to pray for him! God will hear and give the brother life, by which may be meant comfort, peace, and causing him to live cheerfully and not be swallowed up with sorrow and despair. Of course, the brother does not continue in the sin; he has a sense of it, a sorrow for it, is ashamed of it, and forsakes it.

But "There is a sin unto death," which is not only deserving of death, as all sin is, but which shall certainly lead to death for all who commit it, without exception. John Gill says, "This sin unto death is the sin against the Holy Spirit; it is sinning willfully, not in a practical, but a doctrinal way, by denying the truth of the gospel of Christ." John Calvin says, "This sin unto death is not a partial fall nor a transgression of a single commandment, but apostasy, by which men alienate themselves from, and surrender themselves to, Satan. We ought not rashly conclude that any professed believer has apostatized; love should make us believe the best;

but, if one has departed, let us not contend with the justice of God nor seek to be more merciful than he is!”

We are not urged to pray for apostates.

To Whom Shall We Go?

“Lord,” Peter said, “to whom shall we go?” Shall we turn to the law? Nothing there but a curse and condemnation. Shall we turn to the religious organizations and preachers? Nothing there but dead works and ritualism. Shall we turn to our thoughts and righteousness? Nothing there but foolishness and filthy rags. “Thou hast the words of eternal life;” not only the word of life and the word which gives life, but he himself is eternal life!

“We believe and are sure...” Notice the order here. Natural men demand to be sure before they will believe, but God reverses man’s order and requires faith first—then assurance. “...That thou art that Christ—the son of the living God.”

Judge Not Life by Outward Circumstances

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy ways.

Psalm 119:71

God’s ways and God’s word are best learned by experience and in time of trouble. When our Lord is pleased to lay his hand heavily upon us, we do not soon forget the lessons learned. When the Lord singles out a believer or a church for special affliction and adversity, it is not for punishment nor lack of love for them; it is for eternal blessings and because he does love them. “Whom the Lord loveth” he chastens, corrects, and teaches!

When Job sat before his friends, who was afflicted? The one God loved! When Paul stood before King Agrippa, who wore the chains? The one God loved! Humanly speaking, which path of life would you prefer to live on earth, that of Esau or that of Jacob? Esau had the life of prosperity and ease; Jacob was full of trouble and conflict—but God loved Jacob!

Thank God he has not left us alone! Thank God he has loved us in Christ and is pleased to teach us his ways by dealing with us in such a way that we are weaned from the world and find our life, comfort, and hope only in him. A person who measures his blessings and relationship with God by his prosperity, health, happiness, and worldly comforts makes a

fatal mistake. “If ye be without chastisement, whereof all believers are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons” (Heb. 12:8). Paul said, “Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

He who sends the trial for his glory and my good will supply the grace sufficient. Those who know the Redeemer also know that when we are weak, we are strong; when we are poor, we are rich; when we are empty, we are full; and when we die, we live!

Three Dreadful Thoughts

Martin Luther once said that there are three things which he did not think of without Christ: his sins, his death, and the day of judgement.

Truth and Love

There are two prominent words that occur over and over again in 2nd and 3rd John—truth and love! These are noble and natural companions which cannot be separated on earth any more than they can be in heaven. God is truth and God is love! Nor in the family of believers can these two be separated. Truth without love becomes stern, cold, and even cruel; love without truth (if it were possible, and it isn't) would be unstable and without foundation. John rejoiced that his hearers walked in the truth of grace and manifested the love of God in both attitude and spirit.

In my desire to know the truth, know Christ Jesus, and walk in a knowledge and demonstration of his love, I must recognize that truth and love have one common enemy—self! Self must constantly be put down and denied if truth and love are to be crowned. “I thought,” stood between Naaman and God's mercy, and “I am” caused the division among the believers at Corinth (1 Cor. 3:4). But, if I can truthfully say, “My thoughts are not thy thoughts,” and “I am less than the least of all the saints,” then perhaps, by his grace, I can make some progress toward walking in truth and love!

Constancy in Preaching

Charles Spurgeon said, “I am today what I was when, as a young man, I preached to crowds in this hall. I have progressed in my theology not so much as the tithe of an inch! That which I preached 33 years ago I preach

today.” And he died seven years later preaching the same message of God’s sovereign grace and glory in Christ Jesus.

Without boasting, except in the mercy and grace of God, I can say the same thing! God revealed the gospel to me 39 years ago, and my message and methods have not changed since that day. Nor is there any reason to change. A man who changes his message either was not preaching the truth then or he is not now.

I do not believe that any person or power can persuade a true servant of the Lord Jesus to alter, trim, soft-pedal, or refuse to preach what he knows to be the word of the Lord. The only fear God’s preacher knows is the fear of the Lord!

Owe No Man Anything, But Love One Another

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Romans 13:8

“Owe no man anything.” This verse has been used to discourage buying on credit or borrowing money, but this is not the application at all. Most people could never own a home or car or continue in business if borrowing money were forbidden in Scripture.

The verse, left in its context, is a continuation of the instructions to make good on all obligations, whether of a civil or natural duty. Obedience, respect, honour, and service are debts which are to be paid. Parents are due respect and obedience. Husbands and fathers are due submission. Leaders are due honour and support. These duties are to be fulfilled.

“Love one another.” This is the answer to all of the above. He who truly loves God and others will fulfill what God requires of him (Matt. 22:35-40; Gal. 5:13:14).

Be of One Heart

When brethren are of one heart, they are able to identify with one another in joy and sorrow. A strong love produces a strong interest and concern for one another.

“Be of one mind toward another.” John Brown said, “Be united in your affections, sentiments, and goals.” It is difficult to love every Christian with the same *degree* of love, for all are not equally lovable and amiable; but we can love with the same *kind* of affection.

“Mind not high things,” etc. Be not haughty, snobbish, and exclusive; but readily adjust yourself to people of every station and give yourself to humble tasks (Jer. 45:5; Matt. 23:8-11). We ought to habitually cultivate a deep sense of our own unworthiness and ignorance.

Rejoicing in Infirmities

When the Apostle Paul prayed three times for God to remove the thorn in his flesh, the answer which God gave him was satisfactory to him. “My grace is sufficient for you.” The Lord has a purpose for these earthly trials and will fulfill that purpose for his glory and our good!

One thing I know; the Lord himself is more glorified, and his grace and strength more manifest and more appreciated, in our weaknesses. When I have nothing to say, nothing to contribute, and nothing in which to find comfort and joy, I will look to the Lord Jesus and find in him all that I need.

If infirmities and trials serve to make me look more fully to Christ, have less confidence in the flesh, and wait upon him, then I will rejoice in infirmities.

Faith That Works

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone, [by itself].

James 2:17

A person may believe, as James says, in one God and not know the One God, his righteousness, his mercy in Christ Jesus, nor how he can be both just and justifier. Saul of Tarsus is a perfect example of this.

However, a person may, through study and preaching, learn what men call “the doctrines of grace” and be ever so diligent in the defense and the proclamation of what is called “sovereign grace” and yet still not experience a gracious work of regeneration and conversion in his own heart.

When James wrote these words of warning, he wrote primarily to those who already believe that “a man is justified by faith without the

deeds of the law;” and what our works of faith and labors of love do is show that we do actually believe God, and these works justify our faith before God and men.

Abraham proved that he believed God by his works. A belief in “sovereign grace” is as poor a refuge as “freewill” if that faith has not converted the soul and made us new creatures in Christ Jesus

The Tenor of Our Lives Reveals Our Master

The person who suggests that, since we are not under the law but under grace, we should therefore give vent to the flesh and sin reveals his total ignorance of the grace of God and the work of Christ. Before a man is regenerated, he does love evil and himself, and he hates God and holiness; but after regeneration, he loves God, holiness, and others. We are not looking for an excuse to sin; we are looking for strength to avoid it.

This is a good way to determine if we have been saved. We should know that if sin masters us, if we delight to do evil, if we enjoy evil companions, if we walk in darkness, then Christ is not our Master. The tenor of our lives reveals our master.

What do you really enjoy? In what direction are you really going? Who is really your Lord?

Looking to Christ, We Continue

Those who are so foolish as to allow anything in this life to cause them to renounce their faith and duty as children of the living God will, like Esau, someday weep with bitter tears when it is beyond their power to recover what is lost! Guard against fleshly appetites and apostasy; guard against neglecting spiritual blessings and privileges lest you come, at last, to mourn bitterly your foolishness and wickedness.

We have entered a race and the prize goes to those who finish (Heb. 10:35-39). There will be difficult times, perhaps heavy trials; and, along the way, there will be tempting pastures of pleasures which appeal to our flesh. We must go on! We may proceed rapidly or slowly; we may even stumble and fall; but, looking to Christ, we continue!

I have a responsibility to the doctrines of Christ, my Lord. Neither the frowns nor smiles of men will cause me to surrender them. I have a responsibility to the church of the Lord Jesus. I have a responsibility to my

family, to keep it together, to set a godly example in worship, integrity, and faithfulness. I must not lay down this trust nor fail to see it through. I have a responsibility to the Captain of my soul! He loves me and I love him.

“Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
and all the world go free?
No, there’s a cross for me.
The consecrated cross I’ll bear,
till death shall set me free,
And then go home, my crown to wear;
For there’s a crown for me.”

I Am Not Ashamed

Borrowing some of the words of an old writer, I say this deliberately and emphatically. I am fully aware that the message of God’s sovereign and free grace is not popular and acceptable in this day. It is despised by many. But none of these things move me. I am not ashamed of what I believe nor of him who is my hope.

After forty years of Bible reading and preaching, I find myself clinging more tightly than ever to the “gospel of free grace,” and, more than ever, I am satisfied with it. It wears well; it stands the fire; it glorifies God; it comforts the heart; it is true to the Word.

In the faith of our sovereign Redeemer I have lived for over a third of a century and, in that faith, I hope to die.

A Letter of Encouragement

While sitting at my desk thinking about writing an article on Hebrews 10:24, “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works,” I received a letter from a dear pastor who, for several years, was a part of this congregation. I was encouraged, blessed, and convinced that this is the very thing the Apostle is talking about; so, I’ll share it with you:

“Dear Henry,

I certainly have enjoyed the last few times we have been able to visit. Just wanted to drop you a note and let you know how much I love you and appreciate your faithfulness to me as my pastor for all these years. I love

the Christ you preach, and I'm thankful the Lord has allowed me to hear him proclaimed through the ministry he has given you."

A Sure Shelter

As we grow older and experience the fulfillment of God's promises in Christ Jesus; as we prove the peace and rest that our Lord truly gives and become more aware of the vanity, emptiness, and insecurity of religion, the flesh, and the world, we are not swayed by the loud claims of new revelations, nor alarmed by the rise and fall of religious professors, nor distressed by our own failures. We look around at it all, then flee again to our refuge, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Should all the works that hell devise,
Assail my soul with treacherous art;
I'll call them vanity and lies,
And bind his gospel to my heart."

The Last Word

One night at sea a ship's Captain saw what appeared to be the lights of another ship out in front of him. So he had his signalman blink to the other ship, "Change your course." The reply came back, "Change your course." The ship's Captain signaled back, "I am a captain; change your course." To which the reply was, "I am a Seaman First Class; change your course." This infuriated the ship's Captain, so he signaled, "You fool, change your course; this is a battleship!" The seaman replied, "And I said change your course; this is a lighthouse!"

Human will, rank, and pride have no alternative except to "change your course" when confronted with the unyielding, unchanging word of God, even if that message comes through a lowly servant!

The Power of God

If the gospel of God's grace in Christ is but the invention of men and has no power beyond the resolve and determination of natural flesh, how do you explain the differences in the conditions, attitudes, and behavior of people where the word is preached, where Christ is believed, worshipped, and honored, as opposed to where the Bible and Christ are rejected?

I defy you to look at a map of the world and compare the countries where the true gospel is preached and believed and where it is not. Compare those countries where the Scriptures alone, grace alone, and Christ alone for salvation have been preached with those countries where idolatry, superstition, and Catholicism reign.

I challenge you to compare homes where parents are true believers and where they are not. Compare the families who worship, pray, and fellowship with other believers with those families where materialism and worldliness reign.

I ask you to compare the honesty, integrity, and concern for others of those who believe with the spirit and attitude of those who don't. Then compare the last days and death the true believer who dies in faith and hope with that one who has no hope.

Yes, the gospel is indeed the power of God!

Wisdom

James bids us to ask the Lord to give us wisdom. The term “wisdom” means more than just knowledge, information, or learning. We can have vast stores of knowledge and be fools. Knowledge is the horse; wisdom is the driver who steers him in the proper direction.

Wisdom is the proper combination of truth and Spirit, of faith and conduct, of mind and heart, of knowing the will of God and yielding to it. Wisdom is discernment of heart and discipline of mouth. Wisdom is seeing the mind and providence of God and yielding to it in the face of opposition from within and without, regardless of the frowns and flatteries which Satan uses to turn us aside.

First Place

The Bereans heard the apostles then searched the word to see if these things be so! Our Lord condemned the Pharisees, saying, “My word hath no place in you” (Jn. 8:37). Let's give his word the place it merits—first place! He has graciously promised to bless that word to his glory and to our eternal good!

Much to be Thankful For

We have had a short, but enjoyable, summer. It's "back to school" this week for the children and back to more routine and labor for the parents. But, as someone once said, "I'm thankful I have food to cook, dishes to wash, and strength to work." It's been a good summer in which we have enjoyed visits from four of our faithful missionary families. Thank God for them and the privilege of sharing in their work. Your gifts are appreciated!

Avoid the Evil of Diotrophes

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrophes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

3 John 9-10

Beloved, do not imitate evil of any kind, but especially avoid the evil of Diotrophes, which was pride, ambition, and love of preeminence, which led him into inhospitality to other believers, a critical spirit, and careless criticism of those who minister the word.

It is not unusual for men of the world to criticize and find fault with God's preacher's, but it ought not to be done by believers. These critics, for want of real charges, usually take up little matters and exaggerate them, and this is not the Spirit of Christ.

Our Work of Faith and Labor of Love

Our "work of faith and labor of love" in his name and to others is not really our work but his work in us and through us. Yet it is called ours because it is done with our hearts and through our faculties by the grace of God in us. God is faithful to those whom he has called and who by faith walk in his love.

"He giveth more grace as the burdens grow greater;
He sendeth more strength as the labors increase;
To added affliction he sendeth his mercy;
To multiplied trials his multiplied peace!"

Love Not the World

Quit seeking those things for which unbelieving men seek; seek those things which are above—life, immortality, and glory. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” May the Lord God burn these words into your heart and mine: “Love not the world!”

Much to Learn

I introduced a Sunday morning sermon with an excellent question asked by a friend; “If a person is truly saved by the grace of God in Christ, will he love, rejoice, give, share, forgive, and endeavor to glorify Christ in his life or must he be taught these things?” My answer: “Yes, he will and yes, he must.”

The principles of grace and truth are in the heart by regeneration, as is the love of Christ and for others; but, children must be taught, reminded, corrected, and even chastised. “Go ye and make disciples, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mt. 28:20).

The very fact that our Lord gave us the Lord’s Table to “do in remembrance of Me” is proof that we need to be taught and reminded of spiritual truth.

A Word on Bulletins

Some of our pastor friends and churches send out their weekly bulletins, as we do. Many of you receive these bulletins. It can be an expensive undertaking, especially for a smaller congregation. If you enjoy these bulletins, send a donation and a letter of appreciation occasionally. This will help and encourage both people and pastor.

Let Peace Abound

While reading a sermon on Philippians 2:14, “Do all things without murmuring, disputing, grumbling, or finding fault with God or the brethren,” I found the following poem. I do not know the author, but I rejoice in his instructions:

“Let brethren all agree and peace among them spread,
Old and young, rich and poor, are one in Christ their Head;

Among the saints on earth, let fervent love be found,
Sons of our great God, with common blessings crowned;
Let pride, that child of hell, be banished far away,
All should in humility dwell, who the same Lord obey.”

Do Spiritual People Sometimes Act Like Carnal People?

In 1 Corinthians 3 the Apostle rebuked the believers for their “envy, strife, and divisions” and accused them of behaving like unregenerate people. Their particular form of division was over their preachers. One group set Paul up as their spokesman above others. Others said, “We don’t care for Paul; we prefer Apollos.” Some preferred Peter, while others claimed only to be followers of Christ. Is this not a demonstration of flesh and carnality?

Who is Paul? Who is Apollos? What are they? They are only ministering servants of the Lord Jesus through whom you heard the gospel. They are not masters, party heads, nor lords! They are only instruments in the hands of the Master to feed the flock. Pastors are to be respected, heeded, and followed as they follow Christ; but they are not to be sources of contention and division.

If the earth is to bring forth fruit, there is need of plowing, planting, and watering. But, even after all this is done, our labor would be in vain unless the Lord from heaven gives the increase by giving life through his Word. The word of God is the seed. His faithful servants plow, plant, and water (nor does one do it all alone); but life is the miracle of Divine grace. So neither is he who plants anything special, nor he that waters, but only God, who makes it to live, grow, and become greater.

We are laborers together with God. We have nothing except what we have received. All our gifts are from God, and each servant is answerable to his Master. The planter and the waterer are one, and each will receive his own reward according to his labor.

Five Convictions of the Spiritually Mature

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:14

Paul declares his aim and goal is to finish the race and obtain the supreme and heavenly prize—the incorruptible crown of life, righteousness, and glory. In the next verse he says, “Let all who are spiritually mature have the same mind and hold the same convictions I have expressed in these preceding words.”

To count all heritage, ceremony, traditions, and works of religion to be dung (rubbish) that we may win Christ and be found in him.

1. To be willing to suffer the loss of all things for a knowledge of Christ our Lord.
2. To disclaim perfection in ourselves while desiring it and aiming for it.
3. To desire to be found only in him, having his righteousness.
4. To desire above all things to be like Christ and press forward in perseverance to obtain that incorruptible crown.

The Lord's Table

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

1 Corinthians 11:23-29

Paul here sets forth the Lord's Table as it should be observed by the Lord's Church.

He tells how he came by the knowledge of it—by revelation from Christ!

He sets forth the author of it—the Lord Jesus himself!

He gives the time of the institution—the same night he was betrayed and arrested.

He lists the materials of the supper—bread and wine (Lk. 22:14-20). The bread represented his broken body and the wine his blood shed for us. Nothing is said of the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation. The bread and wine do not actually become the body and blood of the Lord, but only represent, or symbolize, his body and blood. "This do in remembrance of me," said our Lord, in order to keep fresh in our minds and hearts his sacrifice for our sins and his intercession now on our behalf. We not only remember his death for us, but we "show," declare, or proclaim his substitutionary work (1 Pe. 1:18-19).

It should be observed frequently. No time is specified; but "as often as you observe the table, you remember and proclaim his death."

Whoever eats the Lord's table in a way that is unworthy of Christ may be said to be guilty of the body and blood of Christ, inasmuch as he

violates this important ordinance, despises the precious blood of Christ, and treats lightly the sufferings of our Lord.

Let each person examine himself concerning his own knowledge of Christ—who Christ is, what Christ did, why Christ suffered, and where Christ is now. Let him determine his experience concerning repentance, faith, and love for the Redeemer; then let him eat. For an unworthy person (not a believer) to come to the table, or for him to come in an unworthy manner (as the Corinthians were doing), or to come for an unworthy purpose is to bring God’s wrath upon himself! This is no ordinary supper, but a most holy time.

The Voice

A deputation of priests and Levites were sent from Jerusalem to enquire of John the Baptist as to who he was. They asked, “Art thou Elijah? Are thou that prophet?” Each time John answered, “I am not.”

“Then who are you?” John might have answered, “I am the son of Zacharias, the priest. I am filled with the Spirit from the womb. I am a remarkable man raised up by God and sent to Israel.” But instead he replied, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.”

Men who are truly sent of God seek no glory nor acclaim for themselves, but own that they are at best unprofitable servants. When John referred to himself as “the voice,” he employed the very term the Holy Spirit had used of him 700 years previously (Is. 40:3). A voice is heard and not seen; a voice praises and calls for praise (it is not the object of praise).

And there really is no reason to speak of the qualities and talents of the voice which preaches Christ, for the Lord Jesus will endure long after the voice is silent.

Rest

“Rest” is a sweet word to the weary soul. All seek it, but only believers find it. Paul wrote in Hebrews 4:3, “We which have believed do enter into rest.” He did not say we shall, but we DO enter into rest.

There is a sweet repose, a calm peace, and a sure rest in Christ. We can trust him to forgive the past, provide for the present, and guarantee the future. If you can believe God, you will find in Christ all you need.

With the Command Comes the Ability

If God commands a man to come to Christ and believe on him, then that man is at full liberty to do so! Christ said to the man with the withered hand, “Stretch forth your hand;” and he did! Our gospel carries with it the same command to the lame and the dead; “Oh, ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.”

Curb the Foolishness

Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking aroma: so doth a little foolishness him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor.

Ecclesiastes 10:1

What is the wise man saying? He is saying that dead flies and bugs will spoil even the sweetest perfume and cause it to send forth a vile odor; even so, excessive foolishness, banter, and kidding coming from a spiritual leader, noted and valued for wisdom and spiritual leadership, outweighs and spoils his wisdom and honor.

I have told our student preachers in the school that if you are given to depression, melancholy, and sadness, brighten up, rejoice in the Lord, and show forth a happy countenance; but, if your nature and way is to carry on foolishness and poking fun, curb it! suppress it!

God’s servants are serious men of a solemn nature on a spiritual mission—to warn men of death, judgement, and eternal condemnation, and to call them to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus. It was said of a preacher I knew years ago, “Don’t take him seriously except when he is in the pulpit.” To which I replied, “Why should I take him seriously even then? Perhaps that, too, is a game!”

I am highly in favor of a merry heart and genuine humor; but I am also jealous for our reputation and honor as serious-minded, dedicated preachers of the gospel. It is not possible to go from witticisms to worship, from playful puns to prayer simply by saying, “It is time to start the worship service.” The reverse is also true! Before service, during service, and after service should be characterized by a broken heart and contrite spirit before God.

Loss and Gain

Furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to that priceless privilege (that overwhelming advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For his sake I lost everything in order that I may have Christ, the Redeemer.

Philippians 3:8

1. He renounced not only the Jewish ceremonies but worldly honor, reputation, substance, comforts, and advantages.
2. He lost self-righteousness and gained Christ's righteousness.
3. He lost ceremonial bondage and gained his freedom.
4. He lost false peace and gained true peace with God.
5. He lost pretended glory and gained eternal glory (1 Cor. 1:30-31).

Put on the New Man

...and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Ephesians 4:24

To put on the new man is not to make ourselves new creatures in Christ, for this is God's work and not man's. It is God who regenerates the sinner and creates a new man in true righteousness and holiness. But to "put on the new man" is to walk daily according to the principles of grace and holiness formed in us. It is to live and walk in the Spirit of Christ and avoid not only the works of evil but also the attitude and appearance of evil.

Husbands, love your wives; wives, be obedient to your husbands and respectful to them; children, obey your parents in the Lord; servants, be good workmen; and masters, be good to those who serve you!

Good doctrine is essential; good conduct is also essential. Paul told Timothy to take heed to his doctrine and to himself, to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Most believers have no problem with lying, stealing, blasphemy, and adultery; rather, the problem areas are usually inward and personal! Submission to the will and providence of God, attitude toward adversity and toward others, genuine love for and interest in the welfare and well-being of others, speaking kindly to and of others, giving and sharing our blessings, forgiving and forgetting all

offenses, and to do all that we do in word and deed for the glory of God and not for the promotion of ourselves and our own interests—this is to “put on the new man.”

Exalting the Saviour

...that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Colossians 1:18

This is the unchanging purpose and decree of our heavenly Father; and it shall be! The question with which I am faced is: “Am I in tune with, and totally submitted to, this divine arrangement?”

To accomplish his purpose and exalt the Saviour, God may be pleased to smash my plans, bring me great sorrow, humiliate and embarrass me to the delight of my enemies, and prove me right or wrong depending upon his will. But “the servant is not greater than his master,” and the flesh and master cannot both be lifted up!

Too often eyes are focused upon us, lips speak our names, men trust our judgement, and confidence is placed in the flesh. When this happens, without fail the man has to be brought down that the Lord may be exalted.

Think on These Things

“Finally, brethren...” In this matter of attitude and humble spirit, “think on these things!” Meditate on them. Consider and dwell upon them in order to put them into daily practice.

1. “Whatsoever things are true...” Agreeable to the truth in Christ Jesus, the truth of the gospel and the word of God.
2. “Whatsoever things are honest...” Honest in the sight of God and men, honest in business, in speech, in conduct.
3. “Whatsoever things are just...” Giving to God that which is his (worship, praise, reverence, myself) and to man that which is his, avoiding oppression and injustice. Owe no man anything he needs or deserves.
4. “Whatsoever things are pure...” Pure in word or deed, in opposition to pride, covetousness, hatred, envy, and self-seeking.
5. “Whatsoever things are holy...” Agreeable to the character of God and his kingdom, that which promotes holiness of heart and life.

6. “Whatsoever things are lovely...” These are faith, kindness, compassion, generosity, and all commendable virtues.
7. “Whatsoever things are of good report...” Things which contribute to a good home, a good reputation, a good opinion for the glory of Christ.

If anything is virtuous and worthy of praise, think on these things. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he!” (Proverbs 4:23).

Commitment

The Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 1:12 talked about a commitment. “I have committed to him.” Nothing short of a full commitment is acceptable. The believer is committed—body and soul—to Christ Jesus; and, in that relationship, he is committed to the gospel, to the Lord’s church, to his wife and children, to the unity of believers, and to continue in the faith.

Do not be deceived into thinking that the Lord God will be pleased with anything less. True faith is only justified by obedience to Christ, whatever the cost to me.

Contentment

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Philippians 4:11

Paul wanted the people to know that he did not want for anything, though he possessed nothing materially. He had all things in Christ and found contentment and peace in whatever condition the providence of God put him, be it adversity or prosperity. He adds, “I know how to be treated with contempt by men, to live humbly, to work with my hands, to be hungry and cold—yet not to be depressed, cast down, nor murmur against God. I know how to be held in the esteem of men, to have an abundance—yet not to be lifted up with pride and forget that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. I have learned of God how to behave toward these temporary things of earth, how to put them in their proper place and perspective.”

And now, lest he be thought to be proud of his grace and ascribe too much to himself, he attributes all grace to the power of Christ in him. “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.” I can be happy in any state and condition when he is with me.

“Content with beholding his face, my all to
His pleasure resigned;
No changes of season or place would make any
Change in my mind;
While blest with a sense of his love, a palace
A toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove if Jesus
Would dwell with me there.”

Be Thankful unto Him and Bless his Name

Psalm 100

One of the preacher’s of the past said, “If a person should give me a bucket of sand and tell me that there were many particles of iron in it, I might look for these particles of iron with my eyes and not see them; and search for them with my fingers and be unable to detect them; but, let me take a magnet and sweep through the sand, that magnet would draw to itself every particle of iron. Now, the unthankful heart, like my clumsy fingers in the sand, discovers no mercies throughout the day; but the thankful heart sweeps through everyday and, as the magnet finds the iron, so the thankful heart finds God’s heavenly mercies and blessings in every hour and every day—only the iron in God’s sand is gold.”

O, God, give me a thankful heart that I might see, feel, and rejoice in all of thy good providence; for I know that the worship most acceptable to our God comes from a thankful and cheerful heart.

The Paradox of the Believer

Paul wrote, “The believer discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man” (1 Corinthians 2:15). The believer, by the Spirit of God, knows the message and meaning of Scripture; yet he, himself, is as great a mystery to the natural man as the Scriptures themselves are to that natural man.

1. He believes God; yet he cries, “Lord, help thou my unbelief.”
2. He has a new nature which pants after God and holiness; yet he has an old nature which must be put down constantly.
3. He rejoices that, in Christ, he is perfectly holy; yet knows that “in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.”
4. He “rejoices evermore;” yet knows continual sorrow.

5. He knows all of the elect will be saved; yet he prays for and witnesses to all men, hoping that they will hear and come to Christ.
6. He is aware of a growth in grace; yet professes himself to be “less than the least of the saints.”
7. He longs to depart and be with Christ; yet he is content to remain here until the Lord calls.

In Christ he has “all things;” Yet he is nothing!

Lay Hold on Eternal Life

Twice in 1 Timothy 1 Paul writes, “Lay hold on eternal life.” Let others go in for this and that; let others take care of the minor affairs, the odds and ends, the form and foolishness; let others argue doctrine, debate terms, and divide and dispute; You lay hold on eternal life! This is the ultimate goal and true riches—the true knowledge and wisdom.

Eternal Life

Eternal life is not a profession or religion, nor a reformation of manners, nor a knowledge of facts about God; but it is an experience of regeneration and revelation of God in the heart. Eternal life is the life of God in us. To know the only true God is not merely abstract knowledge (such as even demons have); but it is to believe him, receive him, bow to him, and love him as he is revealed in Christ.

Eternal Security

And this is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

John 6:39

Quite frankly, eternal election and eternal predestination guarantee eternal glory! Our salvation, security, and resurrection in that great day do not rest upon anything in us or done by us, but upon the Father's purpose and the Son's obedience and sacrifice. Without exception, he that has begun a good work in you will complete that work until the day of Jesus Christ.

It is quite true that if a man believes on Christ, he shall be saved; but his elect will believe! It is true that all who love Christ shall be saved; but his elect will love Christ, they will love one another, they will bear fruit, and they will continue in the faith.

John summed it up when he said, “They went out from us, which proves they never were of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued.”

Constrained by Love

Why do you folks read the Bible, pray for one another, attend worship services, support the preaching of the gospel so faithfully and generously? Why do you help one another, comfort one another, and encourage one another? Why do you share your blessings, work at the church, seek the well-being and happiness of others, and invite others to your homes and tables? I can answer for you! All believers in the Lord Jesus are under the sweetest and strongest constraint to do what they do; they are motivated by the love of Christ—His love for them and their love for him! It is not fear of hell, desire for reward, nor concern for acceptance that excite us to duty, devotion, and works of faith, but Christ’s eternal love which led him to redeem us by his life and death.

The Gift of God and Duty of Man

“Salvation is of the Lord,” cried Jonah from the belly of the fish; and indeed it is. It is the Father who chose us, who set his love upon us from all eternity. It is the Son who redeemed us—The Lord our righteousness—who by his life and death both sanctified and justified us in God’s sight. It is the Holy Spirit who quickened the dead and made us to live. But all saving acts must be performed by the man himself.

Faith is the gift of God, but the Holy Spirit never believed for anybody; it is not his office to believe but to woo, draw, and teach us to believe. The sinner must believe! Repentance is the work of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit never repented. What has he to repent of? The sinner must repent!

There must be in every person who comes to Christ a personal repentance and a personal faith; and though these are wrought in him by the Holy Spirit, yet they are his own acts. They cannot be the acts of anyone else or the person has not repented and has not believed and there is no spiritual life in him. For instance, the Holy Spirit helps us to pray; he

helps our infirmities. but we pray! True desires after God must be your own desires. The desire is wrought in you, but still it is yours!

The Right Motive

I do not put pressure on people to be baptized nor to be identified with this church as members nor to give to support its many ministries, simply because our faith in Christ, personal identification with his church, and our gifts and works must be Holy Spirit led and heart motivated or they will only serve to add to our condemnation. However, I strongly support such actions and give thanks to the Lord daily for you have been so led and faithful for so long.

Love Not the World, Nor the Things That Are in the World

The believer loves relatives and friends in the world, he loves and pities all people of the world, he loves the blessings of fellowship and the good things that God gives to us and enables us to enjoy in the world; but, he does not love the world nor the things of the world above God and Christ.

He doesn't take satisfaction nor contentment in them, nor make idols of them, nor prefer them to heavenly and spiritual things! His citizenship and interests are in the kingdom of God. His true family is the family of God, and he knows that the fashion of this world passes away. He prefers nothing and no one in this world to Christ.

If a man's affections and interests are set upon the world, the things of the world, and the companionship of worldly people, it is clearly evident that he does not have the love of God in him. No man can serve two masters (2 Tim. 2:19; Lk. 14:25-33).

Neither Imitate nor Justify the Errors of Others

A pastor friend justified his support of Billy Graham with the fact that Spurgeon had D.L. Moody preach in his pulpit. Two lessons are learned here:

1. We cannot justify ourselves nor our deeds by the fact that someone else had done, or is doing, the same thing. We ought to learn from the errors of others, not imitate them.
2. An imitation is always inferior to the original! Spurgeon himself said, “When we imitate a man, we generally imitate his weaknesses, not his strength; for our nature is drawn to the weaker part of the man.”

Pride

Pride is one of the great causes of unbelief. This is the influence of Satan, who being lifted up with pride, fell into eternal condemnation. By pride he ruined us at first; “Ye shall be as gods,” he said. And by pride he still keeps men under his power. The pride in the hearts of sinners stands directly opposed to salvation by grace! God will give life freely in Christ, but the proud sinner prefers to merit and deserve it. God will have eternal life to be *all* of grace (that no flesh should glory in his presence), but the sinner wants it to be of his works that he might have some glory.

Men will put themselves in monasteries, go to the mission fields, tithe, keep holy days, count beads, afflict their bodies, go on pilgrimages, strive to keep laws, and do almost anything for pardon and salvation rather than receive eternal life as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Why? Pride!

The pride of the human heart will try anything, no matter how difficult or demeaning, rather than bow before God as a sinner and be saved by grace. Isn't it strange that a naked beggar would rather clothe himself with filthy rags than to accept the beautiful, spotless robe of Christ by grace? Isn't it strange that a condemned criminal would rather seek to prove his innocence than to accept a full and free pardon from the hand of the King? It is not strange when one knows the awful pride of the human heart!

To be saved and justified freely by the doing and dying of another is a situation the proud human heart cannot understand nor agree to until the strength of that pride is broken by the almighty power of God.

True Worship

Spurgeon once said, “Depend on it, the nearer we get back to the nakedness of worship, the nearer we get to its truth and worship; and it is

because man has fallen that his body wants clothing, so he is always dressing up his religion.”

Why the special garb for the preacher, the robes for the choir, the crosses, the candles, the processions and special effects when God looks only on the heart? I’m sure the answer will return from some quarters, “We know God is spirit and is worshipped only in spirit and truth. We do not use these visual aids for God but for men, that they may be influenced to feel more religious and reverent.”

My friend, what a solemn and serious charge to bring against your congregation! That you can, with carnal means, do what the Spirit of God cannot do for them; namely, to give them a heart to love, adore, worship, and thank God! Mr. Spurgeon is quite right in saying, “The nearer we get back to the nakedness of worship, the nearer we get to its truth and worship.”

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1990

Would You Be Justified Before God?

Then learn one thing! Jesus Christ is all in our justification before God! Only through Christ can a sinner have peace with the Holy God. Only by Christ alone can a sinner be accepted and admitted into God's presence. His righteousness is the only robe which will cover us. His blood is the only mark that will save us from eternal death. His name is the only name by which we shall obtain an entrance through the gate of eternal glory.

I pity those who try to obtain God's favor by their works; and I sound a clear warning – you are building on sand; you are spending money for that which is not bread; and you will hear him say, “Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

But this I know – no one person has ever entered heaven's courts with any testimony but this; “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood – to him be the glory” (Rev. 1:5-6).

Who Concerning the Truth Have Erred

And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

2 Timothy 2:17-20

Paul, writing about two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth had erred, declared, “nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure...the Lord knoweth them that are His.”

It grieves all believers to see those who have made a profession of faith in Christ, who have indicated that they believed his word and loved the Lord Jesus, who have even preached, taught the Word, and been faithful for a time, fall away from grace, the gospel, and church fellowship. However, while we grieve for them and others who they influence, we ought not to be amazed or unduly shaken; for our Lord warned of tares among the wheat, of branches that bear no fruit, and of false teachers among the true.

“In a great house,” Paul continues, “there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also vessels of wood and earth; some to honor and some to dishonor (or some to other uses).” So too in the church. There are men and women who faithfully reflect the grace and honor of Christ all their lives, chosen vessels of pure gold. There are others who will be used of God to accomplish his purpose, even in their unfaithfulness.

Both Moses and Pharaoh were raised up to accomplish his purpose. O, by his grace, to be a vessel of honor!

What is a Good Hope?

God hath given us a good hope through grace.

2 Thessalonians 2:16

Being conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity, and brought forth from the womb speaking lies, it is my hope that I shall be born again by the Spirit of God and the word of God, given the very life of God through faith.

Being a sinner by choice and by practice, having offended God in thought, word, and deed, it is my hope that my sins shall be forgiven by the mercy of God and blotted out by the blood of Christ.

Having no righteousness nor merit of my own (for even my righteousnesses are as filthy rags in his sight), it is my hope of being clothed in the beauty of holiness and the righteousness of God accomplished by the obedience and merit of Christ.

Being frail flesh and subject to temptation both within and without, from the flesh and the devil, it is my hope that, by the grace of God, I will continue in the faith of Christ, hold to my profession, and persevere to the end – being able to declare with Paul, “I have kept the faith.”

Being a dying man (for I shall go the way of all who have lived before; and, as it is appointed unto men once to die, I shall die), it is my hope that, in Christ, I shall have part in the first resurrection and that this mortal shall put on immortality and this corruptible, incorruption.

Having a desire to be with Christ and to be like Christ, it is my hope that I shall live eternally in his presence and be perfectly conformed to his blessed image!

“These eyes shall see him in that day,
The Lord that died for me;
And all my rising bones shall say,
Lord, who is like to thee?”

“There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast.”

We Will Not Go Back

Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

Romans 6:9

So too we, being crucified with Christ, raised from the dead, and seated with him in the heavenlies, will not go back to our old way of life, to dead works and religious traditions, to laws and sabbaths, to sin and corruption. We live unto God!

Because he lives, we live also; for we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. Like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

We Preach Christ

The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:22-23

Times have changed but men have not. Most religionists still seek signs, tongues, feelings, and experiences. The other camp of religionists still seek wisdom, intellectualism, and philosophy.

But God's preachers preach Christ. They know Christ, love Christ, and desire that others know and love him too. Such a vast, infinite, and heavenly gospel can never be exhausted; so, we preach Christ today and tomorrow, as our first and last message, and as the full sum of our theology.

We Have Come Into his House and Gathered in his Name

I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.

Psalms 122:1

I can—and do—worship the Lord anywhere; I can pray and rejoice in God's mercy in Christ anywhere; I can read the word and meditate upon his grace anywhere; but there is a time and a place (referred to as the house of God) where the people of God gather in his name each week to

worship, pray, preach his Word, and encourage one another. He promised to be in their midst.

They meet to seek his face, his blessings, and to hear the word he has given his servant for them at that time. They also come with their children to be identified both individually and as families with the Lord and his kingdom. They come to praise him in joy and to seek his comfort in their sorrows.

For all these reasons, I am glad when that day dawns and that time approaches and I can meet my true family in my Father's house. But, I must be honest, as one called of God to speak for him; I cannot believe for one moment that those who forsake this sacred assembly and find every excuse not to be there (whatever the reason) have a true love and regard for our blessed Redeemer.

Walking the Talk

I need constantly to remind myself that all things which occur in the life of a believer are of God and will bring eternal good. Let me not preach divine sovereignty and then complain of my lot in life. Let me not talk of divine purpose and then spend my days murmuring about my trials and troubles.

It is totally inconsistent with faith in the sovereign Christ for me to question his good providence. Paul called covetousness "idolatry" and said, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content" (Phil. 4:11). I pray for submission to his perfect will, for with submission comes peace and rest.

Two Sides to Every Coin

Divine sovereignty without human responsibility leads men to fatalism and indifference. "Who can resist his will? Then why blame me for sinning?" (Rom. 9:18-19).

Human responsibility without divine intervention leads men to despair and helplessness. "How then can man be just with God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job 25:4).

Sovereign election without means and the response of repentance and faith leads men to idleness and an unjust view of God. "I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where you have now sown, so I did nothing." (Matt. 25:24).

Human effort and means without divine purpose leads men to pride and self-righteousness. “Being ignorant of God’s righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness.” (Rom. 10:3).

The kingdom of Christ or the reign of Christ on earth without the reign of Christ in the heart leads men to seek rewards, position, and self-glory. “Grant that my sons may sit one on thy right hand and one thy left in the kingdom.” (Matt. 20:21).

Religious activities and even outstanding gifts and services without love for Christ and others lead men to empty service and worthless sacrifice. “Though I bestow my goods to feed the poor and my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Cor. 13:3).

Spirit without truth is wildfire; truth without spirit is dead orthodoxy. Grace without obedience is disgrace; obedience without grace is hypocrisy.

True Faith...

True faith throbs in a man’s pulse, it looks out of his eyes, it lights up his countenance, it softens his touch, it mellows his voice, it bows his head, it bends his knee, it opens his hand, it orders his steps, and it gives him a hearing ear.

He lives for Christ; and, if necessary, he would die for him.

Trials

No trial or suffering is easy. If trials were without pain and discomfort, they would not accomplish the purpose for which they are sent (James 1:2-4). But, when we look at all of earth’s sorrows, sufferings, and trials in the light of his eternal glory; when we shall be like him, enjoy his presence, and partake in his perfect kingdom, then we will look on these present inconveniences as nothing. They are not worthy to be compared to that glory (1 Jn. 3:1-3).

Three Dreadful Thoughts

Martin Luther once said that there were three things which he dared not think of without Christ: his sins, his death, and the day of judgement.

Things Necessary and Needful to Know

We must never imagine that all that our Saviour did and said is recorded in the Bible or in any other book. If all the miracles he did, sermons that he preached, works he performed, and words he spoke had been written in books, the world itself could not contain the books that must be written; for he is from everlasting to everlasting.

However, God has been pleased to have written all that is necessary and needful for us to know concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ so that we may know him, believe him, and be brought in saving faith to him (Jn. 20:31).

They Preached the Gospel of Grace

The apostles and the early believers were despised by the religious Jews because of the gospel which they preached. It was not because they lived immoral lives, failed to do good works, nor because they were covetous or proud men. They were persecuted because the gospel of God's grace, which they preached, was offensive to human pride.

They preached (as I trust we do also) that salvation, even for the most moral person on earth, is only possible because of the grace and mercy of God, given to us in Christ Jesus. These people of God knew nothing of free-will, decisionism, and giving God a chance. They knew only one way of salvation, that of God being gracious and showing sovereign mercy to sinners in Christ.

The gospel of grace and glory does not appear occasionally in their preaching and writings, nor was it a deeper truth of doctrine which they discussed privately; it reigns, shines, and dominates all that they said, wrote, and did. It was the only thing that they preached! To them, any word of human worthiness, works, or rights was totally wrong and counted for nothing in the matter of acceptance before God. They addressed all men (even themselves) as guilty, condemned, and justly perishing unless God is pleased to come in mercy and lift the beggar from his dunghill dwelling, sanctify and justify him through Christ Jesus, and accept him in the Beloved. "God be merciful to us, and bless us; and cause thy face to shine upon us" (Ps. 67:1).

The Trials of Our Faith

Some of the Lord's people are going through some difficult trials at this time. I would say to you what Simon Peter said; "Beloved, do not be amazed or bewildered by trials and afflictions which come upon you." Afflictions and trials are the common lot of God's people in all ages. These trials are not by chance but are by Divine appointment for his glory and our eternal good. If you can, "rejoice inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, and when his glory shall be revealed, you will be glad with exceeding joy."

These trials reveal faith, which becomes more precious through trial.

They try our love for Christ, which cannot be dimmed nor drowned in the tears of suffering.

They try our hope of eternal life, for "Whom have I on earth or in heaven beside thee?"

They enable us to give a good witness to others concerning him whom we believe, revealing whether it is indeed him whom we desire rather than the loaves and the fishes he provides (Jn. 2:23-25).

The Tongue is a Fire

Just a match, or even a spark, can destroy a home, a forest, or a city. And like the horse's bit, the ship's rudder, and the little match, the tongue is a small thing; well-ordered and sanctified, it can preach the gospel, give comfort, bring happiness, build friendships, unite people, etc. But the tongue can also do great harm and evil. The tongue, when moved by anger, envy, jealousy, ambition, and like passions, is like a destructive, spreading fire which destroys without partiality or pity.

1. It is like a fire from the heat of it; it is an instrument of wrath that stirs passions like water boiling.
2. It is like a fire in the danger of it; no one in its path is safe. It can turn a happy home or a church into a barren wilderness.
3. It is like a fire in the duration of it; a fire out of control is hard to stop, and words spoken in anger live on and on.

This small member can destroy friendships that have stood for years. It can destroy homes and churches that have been happy and content. It can destroy character and reputations, plant suspicion and doubt, and turn men from the truth to error.

The Risen Saviour

To believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead is to:

1. Believe that he came to this earth as “God in the flesh” (Jn. 1:14).
2. Believe that he truly died on the cross for our sins (1 Pe. 1:18-19).
3. Believe that the sacrifice was effectual and sufficient, for God raised him from the dead (1 Cor. 15:13-22).

The Life of Faith

True faith is built upon the strongest evidence possible – the word of God! True faith is a total dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ for all our needs, such as forgiveness, sanctification, peace, and eternal life.

The true believer renounces all confidence in his flesh, rejoices only in Christ Jesus, and worships God in Spirit. He feeds upon Christ as the bread of life, embraces Christ as his wedding garment, derives all strength and comfort from Christ, and trusts himself to the care of Christ as his shepherd, teacher, priest, and king.

This is the life of faith.

The King’s Highway of Holiness

Never a prayer ascended to God save through the Lord Jesus Christ. Never has a blessing come down to man save through the same Divine Mediator. There is now a highway of holiness on which the redeemed can walk with God and God can come to us.

The King’s highway is Jesus Christ – the Way, the Truth, and the Life. I urge you to believe on, and trust in, the Lord Jesus. The reason why we cannot come to God except through Christ is that, though God is love, mercy, and grace, we are unholy and impure. His holy eye cannot endure iniquity. God is just, and his justice cannot tolerate sin.

Therefore, we must have a God-appointed advocate. That advocate is his well-beloved Son, who is our wisdom, righteousness, redemption, and sanctification. Sinner, come to God in Christ! Come and welcome!

The Great Purpose

The great purpose of our God in Christ Jesus is not so much to make us to be happy, but holy; and not here contented, but there conformed to his image!

The All-Sufficient Saviour

The Scriptures plainly say, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life.” I plan to leave it right there – adding nothing and taking nothing away. Jesus Christ is the all-sufficient Saviour, and he that believes on him is not condemned. I also add that this matter of justification by faith is the article by which a church, a minister, or a professor of Christianity stands or falls. There is no bridge between merit and mercy. They are as far apart as the poles and never the twain shall meet.

Strengthen thy Brethren

Our Lord said to Simon Peter, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” Whatever the Master meant by the word “converted,” it resulted in Peter’s becoming a pillar of strength and encouragement to other preachers, and not a source of division and discord.

Spiritual Life

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Colossians 3:4

What is natural life? Who can explain it? It is here one moment and then it is gone. The physician cannot control it, the scientist cannot create it, the philosopher cannot explain it! But spiritual life can be explained – “Christ is our life!”

He is the source of it. We were dead in sins, and he came into us bringing life. “Christ formed in you.”

He is the strength and sustenance of it. The natural life lives on food, water, and sleep. The spiritual life lives on Christ our bread, Christ our water, and Christ our rest.

He is the security of it. Natural life shall end in death; spiritual life shall never end. Because he lives, I live; as long as he lives, I live; where he lives, I live! The believer will believe and will continue in faith; but, our security is not in our faithfulness, but in His; not in our love for him, but in his love for us; not in our immutability, but in His! “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.”

He is the example of it. A believer lays Christ before him as a school boy puts the copy at the top of the page and tries to imitate it. We seek to love as he loved, to give as he gave, to forgive as he forgave, to pray as he prayed, and to live as he lived. And when he shall appear (who is our life), then shall we appear (be manifested) with him in the glory of the Father.

Spiritual Growth

Trials are necessary for our spiritual growth! Muscles are not developed except by exercise. Tribulation worketh patience; that is, it develops it and increases it. How else would we learn to forgive if we were never offended? Could we be sure that we believe and trust our Lord if that faith were not put to the test? “Therefore,” Paul said, “we glory in tribulations” (Rom. 5:3-5).

Sound Speech That Cannot Be Condemned

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

Titus 3:8

Our words should be wholesome and free from corruption, not only in the pulpit and in public worship, but also in personal contact and private conversation. Sound speech in the ministry of the word is imperative; but, does it not also relate to ordinary life and familiar conversations?

Everything that unbelievers can seize upon, which is to them improper and unwholesome for a Christian, they will use maliciously against Christ and his gospel. The result is that, through our carelessness, Christ is insulted. Nathan said to David, “You have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme” (2 Sam. 12:14).

Let us at all times be careful not to give the enemies of our Lord ammunition to use against our gospel.

Some Good Questions and Answers

The believer lives on Christ, leans on Christ, and loves the Saviour – his Word, his promises, and his people. You can ask him, “What is your hope for acceptance with God?” and he will reply, “The righteousness of Christ Jesus.” You can ask him, “What do you trust for the forgiveness of your sin?” and he will tell you, “The blood of Christ Jesus.” You can ask him, “In what merit do you hope to stand innocent and justified at the great Judgement?” and he will reply, “The intercession and wounds of Christ Jesus.” You can ask him, “What is the real foundation of your faith and confidence?” and he will say, “The infallible, inerrant, unchanging word of God.”

Saving Faith

I know that there are some who have strong faith and much assurance; but, there are many who complain of weak faith and little assurance. But weak faith is true faith, and weak faith will surely justify if it receives Christ and rests only upon him.

I warn every man, “Take heed that you do not think for a moment that the strength of your faith or the longevity of your faith has anything to do with your salvation!” No! It is Christ’s blood and Christ’s righteousness which saves. Never mind when, how, or how long; “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”

Salvation is a Person

You may be weary of hearing me say it, but salvation is not in a decision, not in a profession of faith, not in any mental acceptance of facts, nor in the letter of the law. Salvation is a person! This is what Christ told Martha, who insisted that she believed in the resurrection. “I AM the resurrection and the life.”

We live because he lives and we are in him. We are righteous because he is righteous and we are in him. We are accepted because he is accepted and we are in him. Paul cried, “That I may win Christ and be found in him” (Phil. 3:8-10).

Read This to Your Children

A loving and generous dad decides to give a bicycle to his son. He works and pays for the bicycle and calls the son to the garage where he presents it to him. The boy wants the bike, needs the bike, and in joy takes it from his dad with a thankful hand. The boy did not buy the bike, did not deserve the bike, nor did he add anything to it; it was a free gift from his loving dad. Faith in Jesus Christ is as simple an act as that son's receiving the bicycle from his dad.

The heavenly Father determined to give eternal life to sinners. He came into the world in Christ and worked for our righteous and justification. He paid the price required of law and justice, and he calls us to see the glorious gift of his love, eternal life. Do you need it? Do you want it? You can add nothing to it; for it is complete, bought by Christ! Faith takes life because (like the boy) it believes the promise of the father.

My sons and daughters, you have no means with which to buy food, clothes, and toys; but you receive these gifts every day from your loving parents, absolutely free! Then learn from this the meaning of faith—receive Christ Jesus, the unspeakable gift of God and live eternally.

Pride

Pride is a groundless thing. We have reasons for almost everything, but we have no reason to be proud for we have nothing to be proud of. Pride should be unnatural to us. Our creation ought to humble us, for we are frail creatures who are here today and gone tomorrow. Our ignorance should be sufficient to lay us low. We spend a lifetime trying to learn a few things in part; then, in old age, we can't remember where we left our glasses. Our sins should lay us in the dust, for it would be embarrassing for even the most trusted friend to view our hearts. Our blessings ought to humble us; for the more we have the more we are in debt to God who makes us to differ. Great debtors have no grounds for pride.

Certainly, a believer has no cause for pride, for our salvation is all of grace! Mephibosheth accurately summed up our confession; "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" Let us pray to be delivered from pride; for it is such a subtle enemy that only the Lord can deliver us. But we must be delivered for "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble."

Pray for Us

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Spurgeon credited much of his success to the fact that his congregation prayed for him.

If you will, pray for us who preach and teach. Especially pray for the younger pastors and the men who preach in other countries. Pray that God might speak to us that we may speak to you and that his word may go forth in the power of his Spirit and be glorified.

Oh, how empty and fruitless is truth without Spirit!

Praising God

When my tongue praises God without my heart, I am but a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. When my heart praises God without my tongue, it is sweet but silent. When both my heart and my tongue praise him who is worthy to be praised, God is pleased and men are encouraged and blessed. "I will sing his songs all the days of my life in the house of the Lord" (Is. 38:20).

Peace of Mind

It is a very dangerous thing to quiet the conscience with anything other than the blood of Christ. It is fatal being at peace until Christ speaks that peace. Nothing can truly pacify the conscience but that which pacifies God and that is the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14).

Our Strength is Christ

How faint the best praise! How wandering the best prayer! How selfish the best gift! When we feel that we are nearest to God, how far off we are! When we feel that we are most like, how unlike God we are! What did the apostle say? "When I am weak, then am I strong." Our strength is always Christ, never in anything we are or do.

Only a Sovereign Lord Will Do

I have said, “Only before an almighty, sovereign Lord will a person sincerely bow down and worship; only by the will and work of an almighty, sovereign Lord can a person be assured of an eternal salvation; and only in the care of a loving, sovereign Father will a person find comfort in the trials of life.” For the least things in our lives are ruled and ordered by our Lord as well as the greatest!

Do you believe this? God’s reign and rule include the simple and inconsiderable things. He clothes the lilies of the field, he feeds the fowl of the air, not a sparrow falls without him, and the very hairs of your head are numbered. “Shall he not clothe, feed, and care for his children?”

I can rest and rejoice when One so great and mighty loves me and has determined that “all things shall work together for my eternal good.”

Once I Heard, Now I know

Any man can read the Bible and understand the gifts of God in regard to forgiveness, heaven, eternal life, and happiness. These things are communicated to the mind by words which we read. But a knowledge of the facts is not sufficient, “for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”

We do not savingly know the great things which God has prepared for them that love him simply by reading about them. It is true the head learns by nature, but the heart learns by grace and regeneration. And the way to life is to have these things written on the heart by the Holy Spirit.

I heard about sin, but I never knew sin until the Holy Spirit convinced my heart of sin. I heard about repentance, but I never repented until the Holy Spirit revealed the guilt of my sin against God. I heard about faith, but I never believed until Christ was revealed to my heart as my righteousness and sin-offering. I heard about justification, but I was not justified until I received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour.

Let Your Speech be Always with Grace

Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Colossians 4:6

This is not just to talk about the grace of God. Our speech should reveal the grace of God.

1. Speak the truth faithfully and sincerely, without lying, flattery, or exaggeration.
2. Speak in love, avoiding gossip, whisperings, or anything that is injurious to the character of another. Avoid sowing discord or division.
3. Speak kindly and pleasantly. Hard words reveal a hard heart. Unkind, cutting remarks reveal a bitter spirit.

Grace is to the speech what salt is to meat. It makes it acceptable, good to the ear, and a blessing to the heart. Grace in the heart will teach you how you ought to answer any person. Knowledge is not acquired by speaking, but it ought to go before it!

Knowing God

How much religion, tradition, and ceremony can a man know and observe and yet not know God? Well, the Jews observed thousands of passovers yet never saw Christ, our Passover. They slew thousands of lambs yet never saw Christ, the Lamb of God. They kept thousands of sabbaths yet never knew the rest of Christ, our Sabbath. They ordained thousands of priests yet never saw Christ, the Great High Priest. They actually carried the mercy-seat on their shoulders yet never came to Christ, our mercy-seat. They ate the manna and drank from that rock, yet never tasted the bread and water of life—Christ Jesus. Oh, Lord, open my eyes to see him who is all and in all!

Knowing Christ and our Place in Life

Coming to know Christ does not require that a man change his business, his marriage, nor his station in life as a servant or master unless that situation or arrangement is unlawful according to the word of God, or dishonest, or detrimental to his testimony, or a hindrance to his fellowship

with the Lord Jesus. In that case, the true believer will make other arrangements.

In Hope of Eternal Life

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.

Titus 1:2

1. Eternal life is a promise, not a reward nor a wage, but a promise!
2. Eternal life is the promise of God, who, being the God of truth and faithfulness to his Word, cannot lie.
3. Eternal life is the promise of God before the world began, so it is not influenced by, nor dependent upon, anything that the world produces.

If We Have Him

The first experience of faith must be toward God in Christ Jesus and not toward the blessings themselves. The Scripture says, “Let Israel hope in the lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption” (Ps. 130:7). The sinner is not to set his thoughts on the blessings and the promises that he wants; but he is to look to, go to, and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ; for He, himself, is the source of mercy and the fountain of redemption. If we have him, we have all that he is!

Here We Stand; We Can Do No Other

Let others waver, compromise, or change their message; but we preach what Spurgeon, Luther, Augustine, Paul, the Apostles, and the Prophets preached; “Salvation is of the Lord!”

God was pleased to choose a people, and Christ lived and died in their stead; and, as God is holy and just, he will call, justify, and glorify them all. He will not—he cannot—pass by or punish one soul for whom Christ died. There is not one sin in the book against any believer; our sins were laid on him, the law is honored, the justice of God is satisfied; and, because sin condemned him, it cannot condemn us!

This is our message, our hope, and our comfort. This is good news to the guilty and glorifying to our God. Why would we seek to alter this message?

Good News

Unto you is born a Saviour which is Christ, the Lord.

Luke 2:11

This is the good news, that the Saviour born is none other than Christ, the Lord. There is no good news if he is not the Lord God. It is not good news that a great prophet is born. Moses was a great prophet, but he is dead. It is not good news that another priest is born. Aaron was a great high priest, but others have taken place by reason of his death. It is not good news that a good king is born. David was a good king, but he sleeps even as do the wicked kings.

But, if you tell me that the one born in Bethlehem is none other than the eternal God who is Prophet, Priest, and King – that is good news! He ever lives to make intercession. He eternally reigns with all authority. He will never leave nor forsake me. If the God-man is my Saviour, that is good news!

God is no Respector of Persons

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.

Acts 10:34

The fact that a man is a Jew or a Gentile, rich or poor, old or young, honored or despised, moral or wicked does not recommend him to God nor in any way gain the favor of the living God. There is nothing about us or of us that would gain the respect or favor of God; for we are all as an “unclean thing and even our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”

On the other hand, neither what we are nor have hinders us from being accepted of God if he sets his love in Christ upon us. “Accepted in the beloved” is both the hope and the plea of any sinner, regardless of his heritage or state.

Glorifying God

When believers walk in truth and love, when they adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour with generous, gracious, and exemplary lives and behavior, they glorify God (Matt. 5:16). The fruits of righteousness by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, as displayed by a believer, not only glorify the power, grace, and mercy of God in them, but cause others to glorify God too. "So shall ye be my disciples."

Our fruitfulness does not make us disciples of Christ, but it is the proof and evidence that we are his disciples. Good fruit does not make a tree good. The tree is first good. The fruit is the evidence that the tree is good.

Giving

The two great goals of a believer's life are the glory of God and the good of others. As we preach the gospel here and in other places and give as God enables us to give to help our missionaries, to help other churches and pastors, and to help the needy, both of these goals are served! An untaught believer may think that when he gives to others, the amount given may be charged to loss; but not so! It is no more loss than the seed planted by a farmer is loss. The farmer must turn loose of the seed, give it up in the faith that God will multiply it according to his will. The farmer must also be free and generous with the seed; for the more he sows, the greater the harvest. Sow sparingly, reap sparingly! Sow generously, reap bountifully!

So it is with giving. We willingly share what God has given to us knowing that he will, according to his Word, supply our needs. Generous people do not lose by giving to others, for God is able to make all sorts of gifts come their way. 2 Corinthians 9:9-10 declares that the benevolent person who is merciful and gives to others shall be blessed of God; and the fruit, influence, and results of his work and example will live forever.

Forbearing and Forgiving

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Colossians. 3:13

As long as we are in this flesh, we will have misunderstandings among us, unpleasantness, and even injustices (we will feel that our rights have been

violated and others have been wrong in what they have said and done). What is to be our attitude?

It is to be two-fold: “Forbearing one another and forgiving one another.” To forbear is to control our emotions, surrendering our rights for the time being in the patient hope that God will reveal his purpose and will. To forgive is actually to put the misunderstanding out of mind and restore a state of love and fellowship.

This is the way our Lord treats us. He forbears; that is, he is longsuffering and patient with us; and he forgives our sins, remembering them no more.

Five Ways to Adorn the Gospel at Work

In our Bible Class last week we talked about ways to adorn the gospel we believe and to glorify our Lord in daily living. Here are five suggestions for all of us who are employed in public work.

1. Be submissive and obedient to your employer, whether he is a believer or an unbeliever. You are hired and paid to do a job. Do it with all your heart as unto the Lord.
2. Seek to please your employer and give satisfaction in every way. Pride of workmanship and production is not to be condemned; laziness and indifference are a disgrace to the gospel.
3. Do not talk back nor contradict. Do not reply to others in a sarcastic, saucy, or grumbling manner. The boss may not always be right, but he is always the boss!
4. Do not steal from your firm in either time, money, nor things which you consider of small value. Do not convert to your own use, without permission, that which belongs to the company.
5. Prove yourselves to be loyal, reliable, and faithful. It is not loyalty nor faithfulness to criticize and find fault with your employer behind his back. Keep trusts and confidences which are committed to you.

In fulfilling the part of a good servant and loyal employee, you are able to adorn the gospel you believe! You make that gospel attractive to others as they see you walk worthy of it.

Finding a Ransom

Who can love God with all his mind and soul? Who can love his enemy as himself? Who can come to earth but never leave heaven? Who is holy, blameless, and separated from sinners, yet one with them? Who can be equal with God and while taking the form of a servant? Who can meet every law and yet never entertain a thought of sin? Who can take the full force of God's wrath for his people? Who can be laid in a tomb and then walk out under his own power? Who can ascend to heaven in the form of a man to sit down on God's right hand?

Find him and you have "found a ransom."

Fan the Flames of Your Heart

Oh, for an open heart like Moses, who cried after years of fellowship with God, "Show me thy WAY, show me thy GLORY." I'm afraid too many of us think we have arrived; and we cease to seek, to hunger, or to inquire in his temple to behold the beauty of the Lord instead of crying, "That I may know him and the power of his resurrected life."

Faith in Jesus Christ

There is a union between Christ and faith that cannot be separated. Take away Christ from faith and faith is zero! It is nothing and stands for nothing. Apart from the person and work of Jesus Christ, there is no such thing as saving faith. For Christ is the bread of life; faith is the mouth of the soul that feeds upon him. Christ is the Saviour lifted up; faith is the eye of the soul which looks to him. Christ is the bridegroom; faith, like the bride, takes him by the hand and enters with him into the wedding. Christ is the garment of righteousness for the naked; faith receives him and his holiness.

I see no reason for all of the conflict and debates concerning saving faith. It does not say, "Abraham believed"; it says, "Abraham believed God!" Abraham believed God in Christ! Christ said, "He rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad." Apart from Christ, Abraham had no faith. Christ was the reason for his faith, the object of his faith, the JOY of his faith, and the assurance of his faith!

So, my faith and your faith (if it is faith), is Jesus Christ and him crucified.

“Nothing in my hands I bring;
Simply to Jesus Christ I cling.”
This, my friends, is saving faith.

Exposition of Romans 12:1

“I appeal to you, brethren, by the mercies of God.” Whatever we are called upon to do, say, be, or give is not to be by way of threats, fear, nor even bargaining, but because of the mercy of God to us (1 Jn. 4:11; Eph. 4:32; Luke 6:35-36).

“That you present your bodies a living sacrifice.” Paul is talking about just what you think he is talking about – our human faculties. Let our tongues be employed in praising God. Let our feet take us to worship, to the assembly, to the door of others to minister. Let our arms be used to embrace and lift the needy.

The believer, as a priest, offers himself to God as a living sacrifice. “Here am I, Lord, send me” – to preach to the lost, to care for the sick, to support the missionary, to cheer the faint, to comfort the weary – but somehow use me to accomplish your purpose!

Is that not our reasonable service, since we are not our own, but bought by his blood?

Exercising Sound Judgement

Why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou look down upon or despise thy brother? We shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ.

Romans 14:10

In this matter of discerning sin, hypocrisy, true faith, godliness, and spirituality in those who profess to know Christ, we are vastly handicapped; for we look only on the outward man, and our judgement is confined to what we see or hear or what others claim to have seen or heard. This is a very poor foundation for judging what Paul called “the inward man.” There were times in the lives of Moses, Abraham, and David that, if their love for the Lord were determined by sight and sound, serious doubts could be raised concerning their salvation. Thank God, the Redeemer sees not as man sees; but he looks on the heart.

It is true that some men’s sins and rebellion against the will of God are so open and evident that it is clear to all that they are not of us (1 Jn.

2:19). But the hypocrisy of some is so well hidden that we must wait for God to expose it. The same is true of most genuine and good works! We are well aware of the labor of love and works of faith of many of God's children; but there are many, many works of love and righteousness done daily, from the heart in the name of Christ, that are so secret and unrecognized by men that they shall not be known until Christ comes.

Far better to be silent and hopeful where a brother's relationship with Christ is concerned than to be judgmental and wrong in our appraisal and being answerable to the Master for sowing discord among the brethren.

Eternally Secure

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

Paul says that he is fully persuaded that nothing in the whole universe (no matter what, good or bad), which is or shall be, can separate us from God's love which is in Christ Jesus. Notwithstanding indwelling sin, the various afflictions, weaknesses, trials, or enemies within and without, we have reason to rejoice and look upon ourselves as eternally secure in the Redeemer's love.

Ephesians 5:9

“The fruit of the Spirit” (the kind of life produces by the presence of the Holy Spirit) is goodness as opposed to selfishness, righteousness as opposed to sinfulness, and truth as opposed to deceit. Where the Spirit of God dwells, these dwell!

Either / Or

Someone said, “Either God governs or he is governed; either God rules or he is ruled; either God has his will or men have theirs.”

Is this a difficult choice? Men of God in the Scriptures had no problem with this. Job said, “The Lord gave and the Lord takes away;

blessed be the name of the Lord.” Eli said, “It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.” David summed it up in 2 Samuel 24:14, “Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man” (myself or any man).

Don't Let Bad Company Ruin Good Doctrines

I was preaching in a certain place years ago and brought a message on “Election.” After the service we went to a home for coffee and cake. A gentleman said to me, “That election you preached tonight is Primitive Baptist doctrine, and I don't hold to the Primitive teachings.”

The fact that election is a precious truth of God's word made no difference to this man. He cared not to look into it because it was a doctrine taught, and perhaps focused on, by a particular denomination. Could it be that a subtle Satan uses these tactics to turn men away from other precious truths?

Predestination; that's Presbyterian doctrine. The priesthood; that's Catholic doctrine. Water baptism; that's Church of Christ doctrine. The baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit; that's Pentecostalism. Soul winning and witnessing; that's fundamentalism. Freedom from the law; that's antinomianism. Obedience and outward godliness; that's legalism. Absolute sovereignty; that's hyper-Calvinism. Responsibility; that's Arminianism.

What have we here? I'll tell you; it is the evil device of Satan (and it is effective) to persuade men to deny the truth of God by associating it with error of spirit, conduct, or practice. Seven times in Matthew 5 our Lord said, “You have heard it said... but I say unto you.” Let us therefore forget what men have said about these things and listen to what he says! Forget the “isms,” the denominational traditions, the positions formerly held, and study his Word. God said; that settles it, whatever men may believe about it!

Do Not Limit the Lord

Thirty-six years ago I preached for a church in Ohio, which was without a pastor. One of the members of the church told me that the preacher who had preached for them the week before made the statement that there were only four preachers in America preaching the gospel of God's grace and

he was one of the four. I thought of Elijah's statement in 1 Kings 19:14, "And I, even I am only left." But what did the Lord say to Elijah? "I have seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed to Baal."

My friends, when we are prone to be depressed and discouraged over the condition of things in our areas or circles, let us remember those words of our sovereign Lord and rejoice! He has many witnesses of his grace whom we have never seen. As I travel around the country, I am encouraged to find, not less, but more and more pastors preaching the gospel of God's grace. There are not one nor four, but thousands, the Lord said, who believe his word and love his Son.

Elijah made the mistake of limiting God! Let us not dare to do that, no matter how deep our convictions on certain points of doctrine. "I, even I, am God and none shall stay my hand nor say unto me, what does Thou?"

Deprive Not Yourselves

Believers who neglect the study of God's Word, who do not have a faithful pastor to teach and encourage them, who do not have the benefit of regular fellowship with other believers will suffer in these three areas: comfort, contentment, and assurance!

Death Reveals the Truth

*Lord, make me to know my end and the measure of my days,
that I may know how frail I am.*

Psalm 39:4

When we, by God's grace, are wise enough to face death, judgement, and eternity, things are seen in their proper light. All these fine ideas of fame, fortune, and friends, and our so-called importance melt like the frost before the sun.

Death reveals the truth, blows away the chaff, shuts a man's mouth, and opens the books. Death takes no notice of what I thought nor of what others thought of me, but only what God thinks! "Oh, that I may win Christ and be found in him!"

Confessing Christ

Confessing Christ is the whole of a person's life, revealing outwardly what God has worked inwardly. It is the confession by word, act, deed, and attitude what God, by his Spirit, has created within our hearts. "One tree is not a forest," it has been said. So one public act is not a confession of Christ.

Closing Thoughts for a Coming Year

Tomorrow is the last day of 1990! The year has gone by so quickly, as does every year since I have gotten older. I am grateful to our Lord for his abundant blessings to us during 1990; and I look forward to 1991, knowing that it, too, will be full, pressed down, and running over with his mercies. By his grace, whatever he is pleased to send our way will be received with thanksgiving.

I thank my God for all of you, "for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident that he which hath begun a good work in you will finish it until the day of Jesus Christ." I will reach two milestones in 1991—I will be 65 (retirement age) and I will complete my 40th year as your pastor! Except to mention them in passing, I don't think I will dwell on either one; for it seems that the ministry which the Lord has given to this church continues to be blessed in so many ways.

Brethren, let us pray for one another and all be "faithful stewards of the grace of God!"

Christ the Friend of Sinners

One of the main objectives of the ministry of the gospel is to convince sinners of their sin and misery without Christ. Men will not come to Christ Jesus until they are so convinced. "The well need not a physician." If you love your soul, seriously meditate upon this fact and do not allow pride to rob you of the troubling but pleasant realization that you are a sinner! Christ is the friend of sinners.

Christ Our Lord Receives Sinners

He received them as a gift from the Father. He received them as a purchased possession when he redeemed them by his blood. "Ye are not

your own, ye are bought with a price.” He receives them from the hand of the Holy Spirit when they are regenerated and called to faith.

But sinners also receive Christ. Being awakened to the curse of the law, the sinner cries for mercy. “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.” Being awakened to the guilt of his sin, the sinner repents in sackcloth and ashes crying, “Wash me and I shall be clean.” Being awakened to his own inability and the sufficiency of Christ, the sinner receives Christ as his sole Redeemer and Mediator. Being awakened to the Lordship of Christ, the sinner bows before him in total submission and surrender. “Lord, what will you have me do?” Being awakened to an understanding of the fullness of God vested in Christ, the sinner commits all things, all hope, and all desire unto him against that day!

Chosen in Him

Christ is the angel of the covenant, and you can find your part in that covenant by looking to him. Many want to know their election before they look to Christ. It cannot be!

Look to Christ as a guilty sinner. Cast yourself on him for mercy and grace, and you will know your election; for all who are chosen are chosen in him. Apart from a saving interest in the Beloved, there is no hope!

By Faith

The account in Romans of how Abraham was justified and received righteousness by faith was not recorded for his sake alone nor applicable only to him; but, it is also by faith that every believer is justified and sanctified. Righteousness shall be imputed to us, as it was to Abraham, if we believe God, who is identified in Romans 4:23-25 by the fact that he raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

To believe for salvation is not to believe only in the existence of God, but to believe on him in regard to his gospel! Saving faith involves the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was promised of God, sent by God, bruised by God, raised by God, and seated victoriously on the Father’s right hand.

Brethren Pray for Us!

Samuel said, “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you” (1 Sam. 12:33). Let us pray for one another at all times – for those who preach the Word, for those who serve in so many ways, for our missionaries, for our children, for those under trial, for the weak and lonely.

This is a ministry of intercession (of great importance) in which we can all be engaged in at all times. Personal, private prayer with thanksgiving will bring God’s blessings. “Ask and ye shall receive.” Let it not be said of us, “Ye have not because ye ask not!”

Believe What God Has Done

One more time let me boldly declare what the Scriptures teach and what we believe.

When our Lord Jesus cried, “Tis finished,” rose triumphantly from the grave, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, everything necessary for the redemption of every believer was fully done! Done as God would have it; done that God may be just and Justifier; done according to the Scriptures; and done once for all! Albert Midland wrote;

“All the doing is completed,
Now ‘tis look, believe, and live;
None can purchase his salvation,
Life is a gift only God can give!

Grace through righteousness is reigning,
Not of works lest man should boast;
We must take his mercy freely
Or eternally be lost!”

My friends, how vain and futile are any efforts on our part either to add unto, or to improve upon, the glorious righteousness of our blessed Lord Jesus. Then what must I do to be saved? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!” Ours is to “believe.” His is to “do.”

Believe and Be Baptized

“See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” asked the Ethiopian of Philip. Philip replied, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.”

I say the same thing to you (who attend this ministry). Has God opened your heart to the gospel of Christ Jesus? Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you, indeed, trusted him to be your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? Then arise and follow your Lord in the believer’s way—confessing Christ in baptism!

Balaam’s Ass Spoke the Truth But he Was Still an Ass!

I assume that you are Calvinistic in creed, fundamental in faith, and moral in manners or you would not be identified with this people. But has the grace you profess made you gracious? Has the love of God you claim made you a loving, tender, and kind person? Has the forgiveness of your sins taught you how to forgive? Has your friendship with “that great friend” taught you how to be a true and loyal friend? Having received the heavenly gifts freely from God’s merciful hand, have you learned to give to others freely and generously? You have studied the person and work of Jesus Christ, but have you learned Christ?

The only true evidence that you or anyone else has of the fact that you know Christ and have truly been with Christ is that you demonstrate in attitude and action the ways and will of Christ. Is this not what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 13? One may have the orthodoxy, knowledge, and gifts of religion; but, if he does not have love, he is nothing! Don’t just tell men about the grace of God; show them what his grace has done for you. Don’t just preach the love of God; demonstrate it!

My friends, a contentious, unloving, ungracious person is a stranger to the grace of God; for the grace of God makes men and women gracious and loving in all areas. “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Balaam’s ass spoke the truth, but he was still an ass! Speaking the truth does not necessarily change one; learning the truth does!

Assurance

How can I, with my weak faith and sinful nature, find any assurance of a saving interest in the Lord Jesus?

Look to Christ and not to yourself! He is our surety from everlasting to everlasting. In the covenant of mercy, he assumed full responsibility for our redemption, and he will make it good. His righteousness is perfect, and in him it is mine. His atonement is sufficient to cleanse me from all sin. His intercession, based upon his person and work, must prevail with our reconciled God. “By his stripes we are healed.”

Look to his word and not to your thoughts! Hear what he says; “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Free from the law of sin and death, free from condemnation at the bar of justice; and, being free from the penalty, power, and practice of sin, you shall someday be free from its very presence. Abraham believed God that he was able to do all that he had promised. The Word incarnate and the word recorded is our assurance. He has said, “I will never leave you,” so I can boldly say, “The Lord is my helper.”

Listen to the Holy Spirit and not to your doubts! “His Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” All of our trouble since the garden of Eden has come from listening to the wrong voice. It is time that every believer tuned out the voices of Satan, doubt, fear, and every enemy of the grace of Christ and began to listen to him who speaks peace to the troubled heart. “My peace I give unto you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Cease from your works, from your efforts to establish a righteousness, from your desire to find some good in this flesh; and enter into his rest!

An Encouragement to Seekers

It has been declared by religious leaders that people of certain ages are more likely to be converted than other ages. We have heard people declare that, should a man live thirty years without being converted, he is not likely to be saved at all. This is not true!

God is pleased to save whom he will, when he will, and has brought men and women to Christ at forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, and even bordering on the grave at eighty. A person who is old is justified in the same way as the person who is young—by the grace of God through the obedience and death of the Lord Jesus.

The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ avails to cleanse seventy years of sin as well as seventy months of sin. There is no respect of age with our God any more than respect of persons. The robe of his righteousness is sufficient for the old as well as the young.

I say to you, wherever you are and whoever you are, “Repent and believe the gospel of Christ.” He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.

Accepted in the Beloved

Let the filthy leaves of our own works be despised and forgotten, for we are “accepted in the Beloved” in all that we need and in all he requires.

About Our Father’s Business

When William Carey announced that he wished to go overseas and preach the gospel to the heathen, a pastor replied, “Young man, if God wishes to save the heathen, he will do it without you!”

What a bad spirit and what error! Yes! God can accomplish his purpose and save his people without me and without you; but, he will use someone to preach the Word, someone to send the messenger, and someone to pray for and support his servant. I want that someone to be you and me!

What a privilege and joy to have something to do with his glorious purpose to glorify Christ Jesus in calling out a people. Today, pray for your pastor as he travels and preaches, encourage and support the missionaries, invite someone to hear the Word, give out a tape or a book, and let us be “about our Father’s business.”

A Word to the Wise

If you had a friend who was planning to go before the King in his own dirty, ragged, offensive robe, and you knew that he would be forever rejected, would you not warn him? Suppose, too, that you knew where he could secure for himself, absolutely free, a beautiful, spotless robe, one with which the King not only would be pleased but one which the King himself had provided. Would you not tell him about it? This is called “good news.”

And which robe would you talk the most about – the offensive garment or the beautiful one? I would think that the more he heard about the King’s robe and the more he was made aware of its glories, beauties, and perfections, the more he would become aware of the insufficiency and corruption of his own. That which makes Christ Jesus more precious to me and his robe of righteousness more needful is not the preaching of what I am not, but the preaching of who and what he is!

A Throne of Grace

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

We are coming, not to a throne of law nor to a throne of strict justice, but to a throne of grace. The words “throne,” “majesty,” “power,” and “omnipotence,” all leave me awed and frightened; but the soft, gentle word “grace” stirs my spirit and heart to venture nigh in sincerity, humility, and hope!

For though there are a thousand defects in my prayers, it is a throne of grace. Though there are many defects in my knowledge, it is a throne of grace. Though there are so many weaknesses in my spirit, it is a throne of grace. Though my faith is so weak and dishonoring to the King, it is a throne of grace. Grace loves, grace forgives, grace abounds, grace is sufficient; and his grace is greater than all my sins.

A Right Use of Worldly Things

It is quite right for a believer to use the things of this world and to rejoice in them. None have such a right to God’s world as his children. But we hold loosely to these things, for they shall all pass away. He is our portion.

A Few Words from Some Old Hymns

The old hymns have a way of saying what I would like to say; for example, when doubts and fears assail, when truth is under attack by Satan and his army of ministers, I would say:

“Should all the forms that hell devise

Assail my faith with treacherous art,
I'll call them vanity and lies
And bind the gospel to my heart.”

Or when I am in the midst of a great trial and the Lord seems to single me out for special adversities and sorrow, I would say:

“Amidst temptations sharp and long,
My soul to the same refuge flies;
Christ is my anchor, firm and strong,
When tempests blow or billows rise.”

Or when age increases, pains are more frequent, friends are fewer, and troubles more numerous, I would say:

“When all created streams are dry,
His goodness is the same;
With this I am well-satisfied
And glory in his name.”

A Blessed Word

A single word, spoken in the strength of God and the power of his Spirit, will accomplish far more than ten thousand words spoken in the power of eloquence, argument, and human zeal. When our Lord is pleased to bless our witness and our preaching, great wonders will be accomplished. It has pleased him by the foolishness of preaching (not by ceremony, ritual, nor sacrament) to save them that believe. “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1991

The King's Heart

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Proverbs 21:1

As we watch rulers, even Saddam Hussein, make decisions which affect our lives, it is comforting to know our Lord reigns, even over their thoughts and plans!

We Have All in Christ the Redeemer

Job said, "I know that my redeemer liveth." Which of the two words – my Redeemer - should be of greater importance? The presumptuous person may claim the blessings based upon the fact that he has accepted the Redeemer as my Redeemer. But the true believer embraces the promises as they are in Christ Jesus; he is my Redeemer!

All of the promises of the covenant are made to Christ Jesus and to his seed in him. We claim the promises, not upon the ground of anything we have done; they are ours because of who he is, what he is has done, and where he is now!

There is a danger of being more taken up with the promises than with the Redeemer, more interested in what was done than in the one who did it. Faith is to receive Christ and, having Christ, we have all in Christ.

Denying Self

What is the first lesson our Lord teaches his disciples? It is this; "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself;" that is, he will renounce his own wisdom, his own righteousness, his own plans and ambitions! He will be content, not only to lie down at the feet of Christ as a "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked sinner" to receive all mercy through free

grace, but he will also count all personal, material, and fleshly ambitions as loss for Christ.

Sometimes the latter is harder to part with than the first! Which is easier to give up, my rags of righteousness for his robe of spiritual holiness or to give up my comfortable home and living and live by the gospel as a missionary or a preacher? Which is easier to part with, my trust in works and law to save or to give up some of my money, lands, and treasures to help send the gospel to others and relieve the needs of God's people?

To deny myself goes much deeper than just idle doctrine; it reaches to those things which I treasure and trust to make me happy and comfortable in this world.

Able to Save

“Able to save” (Heb. 7:25) means something more than just delivering men from hell. “Able to save” is the whole work of salvation from the first conviction of sin to complete glorification. Christ is not only “able to save” those who repent, but he is able to make men repent. Christ is not only “able to save” those who believe, but he is able to give a new heart and work faith in men. Christ is not only “able to save” those who continue in the faith, but he is able to keep us from falling and give us a holy desire to be like him.

God's Providence and Man's Responsibility

Suppose a man should say to you, “I will not open my store today because I do not know if God has decreed that I should sell my goods or if God has ordained anyone to buy from me.” Suppose that he then added, “I shall neither eat nor drink this month, for God has fixed the length of my life and I shall die at the appointed time.” Would you not conclude that the man was either mentally ill or a total fool?

Even so, the man who declares, “There is no need to search the scriptures, seek the Lord, nor strive to enter the kingdom of God; for, if I am elected and ordained to life, I will be saved,” is also a fool! It is true “the election hath obtained it,” and “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed;” but, let me tell you, in this matter of seeking the Lord, repenting toward God, and believing on Christ, you have no more concern

with the secret counsels and purposes of God than you have in the length or quality of your life on earth.

Do what God commands you to do; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, reach out (like the weary woman) and touch the Lord, cry out for mercy like Bartimaeus of old, and then you shall know your election of God. “God maketh rich and God maketh poor;” but the man who draws the paycheck is the man who goes faithfully to work; and the man who enjoys eternal glory is the man who goes – believing – to Christ Jesus!

A Word or Two for The Timid

1. It is a great privilege to occupy the least room in the Lord’s house.
2. God uses the small vessels as well as the greatest for his purposes.
3. The least vessel is his property; he owns them all.
4. The weakest measure of grace is a pledge of more grace to come. Faithful in few things leads to ruler over many.

Signs of the Time

I received a telephone call this week from a religious organization which began with this question: “We have put together study material to help pastors get their church membership interested and involved in the church and its work. Would you be interested in receiving the material?” The caller was shocked when I replied, “No.”

Organizations and projects such as this are the results of today’s “evangelism and easy believism.” Multitudes are brought into the church who know nothing of the grace of the God, the love of Christ, and the fellowship of believers.

Beloved, knowing as you do something of what we were by nature, what the Lord God in mercy and love has done for us through the obedience and death of our Lord Jesus, what we are now and have by his gracious call and loving intercession, can you even imagine not being interested in knowing more of that grace and not involved in his worship, his work, and his kingdom?

Salvation is indeed “of the Lord;” and all whom he saves will say with Paul, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in him.”

I Know Who Holds Tomorrow

The news from Israel and the Gulf has “the preacher of prophecy” aroused again and predicting all sorts of things for our time. People are curious to know the return of our Lord. Will the temple be erected in Jerusalem? Will the rapture occur soon? Will all resort to one temple in a millennium? Will all nations speak one language? Questions are being asked about the future.

My friends, I cannot predict the future, and neither can they! But I know who holds the present and the future in his hands; and I am content to bow to him, worship him, and leave tomorrow to his will and wisdom. I know that Christ will come, and we shall, by his grace, reign with him. But let us be about our Lord’s business as if he were returning tomorrow, yet content to worship him and preach his gospel even if he is pleased to tarry another thousand years.

“Content with beholding his face,
My all to his pleasure resigned.
No changes of season or place
Will make any change in my mind!”

In Everything Give Thanks

Earthly possessions, honors, and relationships have no value beyond this world; but to be forgiven of sin and made a joint heir with Christ Jesus is of the greatest eternal value! To learn this in heart is to avoid covetousness (which is idolatry) and to enjoy peace and contentment with much or little. “In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:18).

God Has Made A Way

That God is able in his mercy, grace, and wisdom to make a way for sins to be laid on a Substitute and the guilty sinner to go free is the greatest glory of his nature that he has seen fit to reveal.

Ecclesiastes 3:14

I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever.

The world with its temporary joys, trials, pleasures, and sorrows shall all pass away; but God will make a new heaven and a new earth which shall be forever.

The covenant of works has failed and is perished. Man is hopelessly dead in sin, failure, and condemnation. But our God has made an everlasting covenant of grace in Christ, ordered in all things and sure, by which he will bring many sons to eternal glory, which shall be forever.

This body of flesh will grow older, weaker, and die; but God has redeemed us body and soul; and, in Christ, our vile bodies shall be changed into his likeness, and we shall live forever.

This family of believers shall all be called away from the earth one by one; but God will one day gather us all together in Christ, and we will never again say goodbye! His kingdom is forever.

Even our faith, hope, and love are so imperfect and affected by all that is in us and around us; but God will give faith fulfillment, turn hope into reality, and make love perfect!

“Nothing can be put to it,” for it is all complete and finished in Christ.

“Nothing can be taken away from it,” for God is in it, and it is all in him who is Almighty, who said, “I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it” (Isa. 46:11).

“And God doeth it that men should fear, worship, and trust him.” Why should we not fear, worship, and trust him? To whom shall we go? he has the words of eternal life!

Paul Believed God

Paul summed up the matter of faith when he stood on the deck of that doomed ship (Acts 27:13-27) and declared, “Sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.” Paul believed God and thus believed his Word.

A New Commandment

A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you.

John 13:34

This is certainly no new commandment in the sense that it is only at this time given, for we find it in the law of Moses (Lev. 19:18); and John said that we have it from the beginning (2 Jn. 1: 5). Why, then, is it called a new commandment?

It is called new in that it is always new in the excellency of it – the royal law of the King! It is called new because it is set forth in a new argument and example – the love of our Lord Jesus for us. “love one another as I have loved you!”

Christ loves all his own, whether male or female, rich or poor, old or young, weak or strong, greater or lesser, and not in the word only but in deed and truth. Let us who are sons of God learn to love as our Master, forgiving and forbearing one another, preferring one another, and love freely and continuously, notwithstanding weaknesses and imperfections.

Put on The New Man

To “put on” the new nature is not to make ourselves new creatures in Christ, for this is God’s work and not man’s. It is God who regenerates and creates a new man in true righteousness and holiness. But, to “put on the new man,” is to walk daily according to the principles of grace and holiness formed in us. Walk in the spirit of Christ, not only avoiding the works of evil, but avoiding even the very appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).

Perish the Thought

If God so loved that he gave Christ, and Christ so loved that he gave himself, shall we not freely and abundantly receive all that he purchased for us? Did our Lord suffer in vain? Perish the thought!

Perseverance

Great and lasting works and ministries are not accomplished by strength, charisma, nor by sudden commotion and activity, but by perseverance! Someone said, “One brilliant stroke of the axe will not fell a giant redwood (nor will ten), but perseverance with a hand-ax will.”

One great sermon does not make a man a pastor nor build a good church (nor will one hundred), but perseverance in the gospel of God’s glory will be honored by our Lord in his time! My strong counsel for all of God’s servants is to find your place of ministry and stay there through the good and the bad, the famines and blessings, and “in due season you will reap, if you don’t quit!”

Five Important Questions

Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 5:6

This is the sum and substance of our gospel and is the great article of faith.

Who died? Christ – the only begotten, well-beloved Son of God in human flesh.

How did he die? A death of shame under the wrath of God, bearing our sins.

Why did he die? He died for, in the stead of, and as the substitute for all of God’s elect in order that God might be just and the justifier of those who believe in him.

For whom did he die? “For the ungodly” – not for righteous men, nor religious men, nor deserving men, but for those who are ungodly in nature and practice.

When did he die? When we were without strength to obey him or to keep his law and without ability to help ourselves. He died “in due time,” at the time appointed by the Father. What good news!

An Honorable Living

Let us beware of the notion that there is anything less than honorable about being poor or working with our hands. Moses was tending sheep when God called him; Gideon was threshing wheat, Elisha was plowing; the disciples were fishing for a living! Paul was content to make tents even after he was put into the ministry.

I find that the less care and concern men and women have for the material things of this world, the more time and interest they have for spiritual matters.

Vital Union

There are two things that every believer wants above all else. 1. He wants deliverance from the guilt and curse of sin – to live to God in Christ. 2. He wants deliverance from the power and practice of sin – to walk in the Spirit.

A saving interest in, and a living union with, Christ accomplishes both. Our Lord Jesus has forever freed us from the curse of sin, being made a curse for us, and from the guilt of sin through his obedience and sacrifice. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.” In Christ we have honored the law and satisfied God’s justice; we are complete and perfect in him!

Also, those believers who are “in Christ,” by grace, by the power of the Spirit, and by faith, walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; and they do mind the things of Christ. That is, they do love the commandments, doctrines, and all things pertaining to the kingdom of their Lord. They are concerned with his glory. Their thoughts are occupied with their relationship with Christ. And their affection is set on things above, not on the things of this world.

It is a matter of being in love with and married to another (Rom. 7:1-6). “We are become dead to the law by the body of Christ that we should be married to Christ and bring forth fruit unto God.” We are dead to the old husband who restrained us and held us captive. We are married to Christ and serve him, not under obedience to written rules and regulations, but in newness of life and love!

The forced obedience of a man under law is the obedience of a slave. The obedience of a son or a wife is the obedience of love (2 Cor. 5:14).

The Person of Christ

There is no understanding of the death of Jesus Christ – its efficacy, sufficiency, or glory – unless one has some misunderstanding of the person of Christ! “What manner of man is this?”

He Is Able

The word of God is the foundation of our faith. He hath said, “I will never leave you” so we can say, “The Lord is my helper.” For, behind his word is his character! Abraham believed that God was able to do all that he said and promised! So, to his word we go for assurance and comfort, knowing that our sovereign, righteous, and merciful God can do all that he promised.

Leave Them There

I know my sins, but I rejoice in his grace. I know my weakness, but I rest in his strength. I know my emptiness, but I am complete in him. “O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,” all because we do not cast our sins, our souls, on Christ and leave them there!

A Hindrance to Finding the Will of God

Often people will come to me for advice, and too often they have already made up their minds about what they want to do and what they intend to do. It is not so much that they seek advice, rather they are seeking approval of their decision. And any counsel to the contrary only damages our fellowship. Is this the way that we seek the will of God?

We make up our minds as to what we desire to do and what we really intend to do and then we pray, “Lord, show me what I ought to do.” We like God’s directions and God’s will as long as it is in agreement with our own!

I am certain that one characteristic essential to finding the will of God is a willingness to wait for his leadership and for some evidence of his direction. Another characteristic might be the willingness to listen to those who have some experience and wisdom in that field. Another help to finding God’s will might be a desire for his glory, even at the expense of our own success and comfort.

Paul said. “For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s” (Phil. 2:21). Can this really be true of us? If it be true, then we have the answer to the question, “Why is it so difficult to find the will of God?”

The New Birth

What, then, is the new birth? It is not the removal of anything from the sinner nor the changing of anything physical or fleshly in the sinner; instead, it is the communication of something new to the sinner. The new birth is the impartation of a new nature. When we were born the first time, we received from our parents their nature; so too, when we are born again, we receive from God his nature. The Spirit of God begets within us a spiritual nature (Gal. 5:17; 2 Pet. 1:4). That which is born of man is human; that which is born of God is divine and spiritual.

Nicodemus was startled. He was amazed at the Saviour's words. Yet he ought not to have been. Man, by birth and nature, is blind and opposed to the things of God. And no amount of religious training can change this evil nature. His chief need is a new nature – to be born again! It is a must! A man must have a spiritual nature before he can understand, enter, or enjoy the kingdom of God.

Humility

We are not desirous of honor, esteem, and applause from men for “we are what we are by the grace of God.” God can take away what we have as easily as he gave it. We do not despise and provoke one another with our piety; nor do we want to appear to be wiser, richer in grace, nor more gifted than others; for we are less than the least of the saints. Neither do we envy the gifts, abilities, or grace of another. God will enlighten us, equip us, and bless us as he sees fit to use us.

Blessed Is the Man That Considereth The Poor and Weak

There is no question but that this scripture refers to our Lord Jesus Christ who came to “preach the gospel to the poor,” and who said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Arthur Pink described them as those “Who have nothing, can do nothing, and know nothing.” “But he who was rich became poor that through his poverty we might have all things.”

But let this mind be in you (who are his people) which was in Christ Jesus our Lord! As Christ considered us in our state of poverty and weakness, so ought we to consider others who are poor, weak, and needy.

For, as David says, “Blessed is the man who considereth the poor, the Lord will also deliver him in time of trouble.”

Those who think of and care for others in their need will find the Lord thinking of and caring for them. He often measures blessings to us using our own bushel! When we come to God for forgiveness we come bringing the principle of forgiveness we ourselves extend to others; when we come to God for mercy, we bring our record for showing mercy; when we come to God for blessings, remember “with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you” (Matt. 7:2).

“Blessed is the man that considereth the poor:
The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble;
The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive;
He shall be blessed on the earth;
The Lord will deliver him from his enemies;
The Lord will strengthen him on the bed of sorrow;
The Lord will transform his bed in sickness.”

(Psalm 41:1-3)

Arriving at Right Doctrine

A man will arrive at right doctrine through the knowledge of Christ; but it is possible for him to have orthodox doctrine and yet not know Christ. The gospel is not a collection of dry doctrines; but it is the revelation of a living, merciful, and ever-present Lord.

My All in All

The Scriptures declare in Colossians 3:11, “Christ is all and in all.” Those who believe him, and his covenant promises are convinced in heart and soul that Christ is all!

1. Then if Christ is indeed all to me, the loss of anything in this world for his sake would be no loss at all. Paul said, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”
2. If Christ is all, then I can say at all times with Jacob, “I have everything” (Gen. 33:9-11). Esau said, “I have plenty,” but Jacob said, “I have everything.” He, of God, is made unto us all things.

3. If Christ is all to me, then the pleasures, profits, and honors of this world will neither interest nor influence me since they can add nothing to me nor take anything from me that really matters.
4. If Christ is all, when I stand before the tribunal of the eternal God, I will lack nothing that is necessary for eternal life and glory!

“They to whom Christ is all,
Though lost and ruined by the fall,
Shall see all danger over, past,
Shall stand the storm and live at last;

For what Christ said will be fulfilled,
on this Rock, believers build;
His blood shall stand, his truth prevail,
Not one word or promise fail.”

What did Spurgeon’s farmer declare to his examiners? “I am a poor sinner and nothing at all, but Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

The Love of God, Not the Wrath of Man

James said, “The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” It was his love that chose us, gave us repentance, and led us to faith; and, if any other sinner is to be brought from darkness, death, and error to light, life, and truth, it will be by and through the love and grace of Christ.

We are quick to say that the whip of the law will not make a man righteous, but neither will the whip of doctrine make a man a believer.

I Will Help Thee

Fear not, thy worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel, I will help thee, saith the Lord and they Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 41:14).

God’s wills and shalls are the sweetest words in the Bible. God says to true Israel, “I *will* help thee.” And, when God says, “I will help thee,” there is something to it, brethren! The will of God started the world into

existence; the will of God sent Christ into the world and to the cross; the will of God called you by grace to faith in Christ. And if God says to you, “I will help thee,” there is no doubt about it.

He does not say, “I will probably help you,” or “I may help you if you fit certain requirements,” or “It is possible to obtain help of the Lord.” No! Without any qualifications the Lord our Redeemer says, “I will help thee!”

Now, there is comfort there. That is enough to cheer the heart of every believer. Why should he not help us? Consider what he has already done. He loved us, chose us, died for us, called us, and intercedes for us.

If this be the case, he will surely help us at every point along our way; for, without him, we can do nothing.

The Lord Will Provide

Read John 6:5-7 and you will see in Philip a portrait of ourselves and, in his answer, our own thoughts and words in daily trials and difficult situations. Philip had just seen our Lord make wine of water and heal impotent people; yet, when our Lord asked him how the multitude was to be fed, Philip began to calculate his own resources and his own ability to accomplish it. He said, “two hundred pennyworth of bread would only give each one a little to eat.”

Imagine talking of a “little!” in the presence of infinite power and riches! What is our feebleness compared to his fullness? Instead of looking to Christ, Philip, like us, looks to himself and to his own strength.

“The birds without barn or storehouse are fed;
From them let us learn to trust for our bread;
His people what is fitting shall never be denied,
So long as it is written – “The Lord will provide.”

A Shelter in The Time of Storm

The problem with people making professions of faith under great stress such as severe illness, sorrow, and the death of a loved one is that, like a drowning man, a soul under this sort of distress will grab at any twig or limb to save his life. But if the Lord intends to save a sinner, he will reveal to the sinner the two great issues at stake – the sinner’s sin and the Lord’s holiness!

Both of these can only be met and dealt with by one means – the Lord Jesus Christ! The awakened sinner can only find hope and peace in a revelation of Christ to his heart. God will not permit one of his sheep to trust and cling to that which will only sink with him.

Too often the shelter sought and found during a sudden storm will be deserted when the sun shines again; but those who are knowledgeable of the on-going, never-ending storm raised by our sin under his wrath must have the one sure hiding-place and refuge. “A man shall be as an hiding place from the storm” (Isa. 32:2).

Submit Yourselves to God

God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble.

Submit yourselves, therefore, to God.

James 4:6-7

The way to overcome pride, envy, and the spirit of carnal ambition is to submit yourself to God! Submit to his will and purpose regarding gifts, talents, and possessions; to his place of service, be it lowly or great; to his will to prosper or empty us, to honor or humiliate us.

There is one name to be praised, one will to be done, one life to be imitated, one person who must have the pre-eminence – our Lord Jesus Christ!

Our Mutual Responsibilities

Men and brethren, I am about to preach to you. May the Spirit of God help me to do it with truth, wisdom, and all the compassion and earnestness which becomes a true servant of God. You and I will face each other soon before the throne of God; and I shall be responsible, in that day, for all that I preach to you; not for my style or talent, or lack of it, but for the truth as it is in Christ that I preach. And you shall be accountable for how you have heard. May our God make that day a joyful day for both of us!

Be Bold

As much as we desire to see men and women come to a knowledge of the living God in Christ Jesus our Lord, as much as we long for them to embrace the gospel and receive Christ as Lord and Saviour, we dare not, cannot, and will not labor to present that glorious gospel in such a way that the offense is removed!

When I prepare a message to preach on the Lord's Day, my thoughts are not, "How can this be said or that be preached to give the least offense, to hold those who visit, to slowly slip up on the ignorant, or to present the truth of God in small quantities." My thoughts are only on this one thing, "What does the Scripture teach? What is the Lord saying?"

My responsibility is to preach Christ and his Word. What my congregation thinks, how men and women react, or the results of the sermon are not my affair – but His! I will preach the grace of God in love, but I will preach the grace of God! I will preach sovereign, effectual redemption with humility and compassion, but not with apologies and timidity. "We were bold in our God to speak unto the gospel of God with much contention" (1 Thess. 2:2).

All I Need

There are two vital things the Holy Spirit reveals to all whom he brings to faith in Christ Jesus.

1. He will reveal our need of Christ!

“I need thee, precious Jesus,
For I am full of sin,
My soul is dark and gloomy,
My heart is dead within;

I need the cleansing fountain,
Where I can always flee,
The blood of Christ most precious,
The sinner’s perfect plea.”

2. He will reveal that Christ is all we need!

“In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily and ye are complete in him.” He, of God, is made unto me all I need. The more quickly we learn that Christ is, indeed, *all* we need to make us righteous and accepted before God the Father, the sooner we’ll enjoy the rest, peace, and assurance promised to his own.

Most of God’s elect are brought to Christ earlier in life than the dying thief, but we all are redeemed and made righteous exactly as he was—by the free grace of God, plus nothing, minus nothing.

Brethren, Pray for Us

1 Thessalonians 5:25

When we elders stand behind this pulpit and open the word to preach the gospel of Christ, I can think of nothing as important as these four words – “brethren, pray for us.”

When we teachers stand before our classes and endeavor to teach the word of God, you can render no greater service or help than – “brethren, pray for us.”

When our missionaries depart from these shores to face the dangers and perils of foreign lands and to preach the gospel in a hostile environment, I’m sure that there is one common request they all would leave with us – “brethren, pray for us.”

Our young couples are starting their lives together, and the responsibility of raising children is upon them – “brethren, pray for us.”

Some of us are growing older; the sands of time are almost out of the upper glass. We have a faith to keep, a witness to give, our God to glorify, and a death to die – “brethren, pray for us.”

What did Samuel say? “Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you” (1 Sam. 12:23).

Some Thoughts on Letter Writing

I acknowledge that the telephone is a great blessing! But it has also robbed us (because of our natural laziness) of the great art and blessing of letter writing. People and pastors used to sit down and write to one another letters which required thought, expressed affection, and could be read over and over for additional joy and encouragement. But it is easier, quicker, and requires much less effort to phone a person – all of which makes the phone call of much less value and meaning.

What a special joy to go to the mailbox and take out a handwritten note from a dear friend, which cost him only .29 cents, but is of greater value because he gave us a part of his busy day and a part of himself in composing the letter. I’m sure that it will be read more than once, while the telephone call is long forgotten.

Faith in God

“Abraham was fully persuaded that, what God had promised, he was able to perform.” It is true that the word of God gives assurance and confidence to faith, but faith is in our God! It is the character of our God that makes his word infallible and unchangeable. It is because we believe God and know his sovereignty that we can rest on his promises in Christ. “Hath he spoken and shall he not bring it to pass?”

Accepted and Admitted

Our Lord Jesus declared, “I am the shepherd of the sheep AND I am the door of the sheep.” He has not only provided a way into fellowship with the Father, he is that way! It is in Christ, by Christ, through Christ, and with Christ that we are accepted and admitted.

If any man, conscious of sin, emptied of self, and desirous of life, believes on Christ, receives Christ, and comes to Christ, he shall be eternally saved and shall find in the Lord Jesus Christ all he needs!

Priorities in Preaching

“Brethren, pray for us” is a frequent plea made by those who preach the gospel, as Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3:1. But Paul’s main concern (and ours should be) was not so much for himself nor for the safety and welfare of the ministers themselves, but for the success and glory of the gospel he preached.

When we urge you to pray for us and for our brethren and for our missionaries, of course we should pray for their general health, support, and safety; but our chief concern is (1) that the word of God may be preached far and wide, (2) that effectual doors may be opened for the preaching of Christ, and (3) that our gospel may be glorified and triumph in other places as it has in you.

In thought and in prayer, may our priorities be in proper order! The minister is but a voice; the glory of Christ and his gospel is our aim! Ministers come and go, voices are raised up and silenced; but the gospel is glorified when men receive it, believe it, and walk in truth and holiness before our God.

“Brethren, pray for us” that our Lord may be glorified in our efforts.

The Believer’s Attitude

Rejoice evermore.

Pray without ceasing.

In everything give thanks.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

This is the will of God, that we rejoice always in Christ, pray continually about all things, and be thankful for his mercies.

Adorning the Doctrine of God

We can “adorn the doctrine of God” with holiness of life, happiness of heart, love of sincere compassion, readiness to forgive, willingness to show mercy, and patience under trial.

Saving Knowledge

No man knoweth the Father, save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

Matthew 11:27

Men may believe in God, but there is no way that they can know the living God except in Christ. They may know of his existence, but his essence and glory are only revealed in Christ. They may know of his works, but his will and wisdom are only seen in Christ. They may know of his power, but his purpose and decrees are only revealed in Christ. They may be acquainted with his miracles, but his mercy and grace are only received in Christ. They may behold his judgements, but his justice satisfied and honored is only revealed in Christ.

If we miss a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus, we may talk of God all our lives and never really know him.

Preach the Word

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

2 Timothy 4:2

“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). There can be no substitute for preaching the Word; and all who attempt to attract followers by any other means only weaken their ministry and build wood, hay, and stubble. Good music, well-written bulletins, personal fellowship, socials and dinners, visitation, and Sunday School classes all serve a good purpose; but these efforts are to no avail without “the power of the pulpit.”

When the disciples instructed the early church to “look out men whom we may appoint over this business, and we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word,” they were setting the example for all of God’s preachers. A preacher once said, “I didn’t have time to properly prepare for my sermon.” My friend, you don’t have time to prepare, you take the time to prepare.

Preaching the gospel is what we are called to do; anything else is secondary. One does not trust his physical wellbeing to a physician because he is friendly, nice-looking, has proper credentials, and has a lovely office, but because his medicine heals! Even so, sinners with whom

God is dealing care only for the healing word preached in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Give men and women the Bread of Life and they will return for more.

Love One Another

“Love one another as I have loved you.” Love as brethren in the same family, children of the same father, forgiving and forbearing one another, preferring one another; and love freely, notwithstanding weaknesses and imperfection. This is the way that he loves us, and this is the way we manifest to others that we are his disciples!

The Good Life

“His commandments are not grievous.” It is more profitable and enjoyable to love than to hate, to forgive than to hold a grudge, to smile than to quarrel, to behave kindly than to act ugly. The way of the transgressor is hard, not the way of the believer. The life of faith and love is the good life.

Why Men Do Not Come to Christ

I have had many people say to me, “Pastor, I just do not understand why my friends and loved ones do not have an interest in the gospel of Christ. It is so clear from the Scriptures that he is the only Saviour and the only way to God and to life eternal.”

Beloved, I wish that all whom we know would embrace the gospel of God’s grace and cast themselves upon our Lord’s plenteous mercy, but I understand why they do not. The problem is not with him (most, like Nicodemus, admire him). The problem is with them!

They do not *know the character of God*! They have no understanding of his holiness, his truth, his justice; there is no fear of God.

They do not really *see themselves as sinners*! Oh, they will not claim to be good; but they aren’t really bad either. They cannot imagine that there is nothing about them that is not offensive to a holy God. They love themselves as they are, so why can’t God accept them as they are?

They do not *feel the need for a mediator*! They can accept Christ as a good man, as an example, and even as a helper; but, the need for Christ as our only hope, our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption

– this they do not see. God must open every heart, as he did Lydia’s, and reveal himself, our sin, and his only remedy.

Absolute Security

John 10:27-29 is one of the strongest statements to be found in the Scriptures guaranteeing the security of every child of God!

1. “My sheep.” They are his sheep and he died for them.
2. “I know them.” He has always known and loved them.
3. “They follow me,” and another shepherd they will not follow.
4. “I give them eternal life.” It is his free gift to them.
5. “They shall never perish.” How can one perish for whom Christ died?
6. “No man has the power to take them out of my hand.”
7. “My Father gave them” to me and me to them.
8. “No man is able to take them out of my Father’s hand.”

The sheep of Christ have a double security. They are in his hand and in the hand of the Father. To suggest that any of his sheep could finally be lost is to blaspheme the Lord God himself.

Once Saved Always Saved

It is true that, once a man is saved by God’s grace, he will remain saved forever; yet the Scriptures are also full of warnings to believers against unbelief, against drawing back, against neglecting the worship of God and the hearing of the Word, and exhortations to continue in the faith. We are told to “abide in him, and in his word, and in his love.”

This abiding in Christ is the result of the life and faith which he has given to us. It is also true evidence that we have been saved and shall be saved. Branches that abide in the vine do not bear fruit of themselves but from the vine and as a result of their union with the vine. Even so, those who are in Christ will bear much fruit, “And so shall ye be my disciples.”

The One Thing Missing

Without Christ crucified, religion is no more than pagan ritualism. All religions have their messiahs, ceremonies, laws, rewards, and punishments. Only the gospel has a crucified, risen, ascended Redeemer.

Beware of any hope of the favor of God, acceptance with God, or forgiveness from God apart from the obedience and blood of Christ.

Knowing, Brethren Your Election of God

1 Thessalonians 1:4

Your election is known by your calling! “You hath he quickened who were dead...” Have you been quickened, made alive to the things of God in Christ? Do you have an interest in the gospel of God’s grace and mercy to sinners?

“The Holy Spirit will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement.” Have you been convinced of your sin of unbelief? Have you been convinced that you have no righteousness and are in need of Christ’s righteousness? Have you been convinced that there is no judgement only to those who are in Christ?

If God has been pleased to do these things for you and in you, then you are elected!

“Our gospel came to you not in word only but in power.” Is the gospel of Jesus Christ only facts and history to you, or has that gospel entered your heart and brought you to seek a saving interest in Christ?

“It is given unto you not only to believe on him but to suffer for his sake.” Do you believe on him? Do you really believe that Jesus Christ is your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption and that He, of God, is made unto you all you need?

“We love him because he first loved us.” Do you love Christ the Lord?

“No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit.” Is Christ your Lord? Have you truly bowed to him in your heart of hearts?

“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love another.” Do you really love the brethren?

There is no problem here. If we are God’s elect, there are evidences enough; so “give diligence to make your calling sure!”

What C.H. Spurgeon Advised

When a preacher becomes heretical, it is always about Christ. If he is not clear about Christ crucified, and you hear one sermon from him, that is your misfortune. But if you go and hear him again and hear another

sermon like the first, it will be your fault. If you go a third time, it will be your crime.

When I Am Weak, Then Am I Strong

2 Corinthians 12:10

There is a sense in which this text is *not* applicable.

1. Weakness in the doctrine of Christ cannot make me strong. It is by the study of the word of God that I grow in faith and assurance.
2. Weakness in prayer and devotion cannot make me strong. God forbid that I should sin against God in failing to pray for you, for the church, and for a revelation of his will.
3. Weakness in faithfulness to worship and fellowship cannot make me strong. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, to exhort and encourage one another.
4. Weakness in character, conduct, and attitude cannot make me strong; it only weakens my witness, testimony, and influence the more.

What does Paul mean, then, “When I am weak, then am I strong?”

1. I am weak before the majesty of God. This is what Isaiah felt when he saw the Lord and cried, “Woe is me.”
2. I am weak before the perfect law of God. When I see God’s holiness, I see that even my righteousnesses are filthy rags.
3. I am weak before trials. Like Paul, I cry for the thorn to be removed; but he replies, “My grace is sufficient for thee and my strength is made perfect in your weakness.”
4. I am weak before responsibility. Knowing the burden of the word and the power of the gospel, I cry, “Who is sufficient for these things?”
5. I am weak in spiritual watchfulness. Like the sleeping disciples, “My spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
6. I’ll probably be weak in death. It will come in due time, and I must depend on dying grace.

All of this causes me, like the rabbit in Proverbs 30:26, to run to the Rock, my hiding place where I am strong.

A Prayer for The New Year

May the Lord bless you and lift up the light of his countenance upon you all and give you peace. May you, during this new year of grace, receive much grace; and may you grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. May we as a church, as pastor, elders, and brethren, mutually strive together to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, boldly proclaim the gospel of his free and sovereign grace, and love, encourage, and support our missionaries and sister churches; and may the Lord save his sheep through the gospel preached from this place. Whatever trials and sorrows by his divine providence may come our way, whatever mercies and blessings may fall upon us, may we be given the grace to recognize his hand and purpose in them all and sing from the heart, “Unto him who hath loved us and washed us from sin, unto him be the glory forever, amen!”

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1992

A Lasting Interest

Man, in his natural state has no desire for the things of God, no interest in the gospel of saving grace; and, when circumstances of sickness, sorrow, or fear do generate some interest, it is usually neither sincere nor lasting!

But when God is pleased to cross a person's path, awaken his sleeping soul, and create an interest in spiritual matters, that interest and desire is not only sincere and genuine, but will certainly result in salvation and eternal glory.

Christ said, "Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me!"

But This Man

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

Galatians 4:21

The life of the Old Testament Jew, under the law, was so difficult. He was hedged in by a thousand commandments and prohibitions. The forms, laws, ceremonies, and sacrifices were many, and every detail minutely arranged. He was always in danger of becoming unclean. If he sat on a certain stool, drank from a certain pitcher, ate a certain food, touched a leper, or did a certain deed, he was defiled. A thousand sins of ignorance were like hidden pits before him. He must be in constant fear of being cut off.

No Jew ever talked of a *finished* work. A lamb was slain, but there must be another; the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies, but he must go in again next year. The law, with its types and shadows, can never put away sin! "But *this man*, after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins forever sat down on the right hand of God."

Look at *our priest*—"A priest forever."

Look at his *atonement*—“It is finished.”
Look at our *position* in him—“Complete.”
Look at our rest—“We have entered his rest.”

A Flower Without Root

If you try to have peace before grace, you have a flower without root. If you seek assurance before you seek Christ, you may attain unto some measure of confidence; but it will not last because HE is our peace, our assurance, and our hope.

A Man Is Justified by Faith

Romans 3:28

Most preachers, church members, and Bible teachers agree with this statement, “A man is justified by faith.” But when we define, from the Scriptures, what Paul is actually saying here, we have great disagreement.

Who justifies? “It is God that justifieth.” Salvation is of the Lord from origination to consummation.

Whom does he justify? “The ungodly.” There are not a lot of folks standing in line to take this title unto themselves.

How does he justify? “By grace through faith in Christ.” His blood and righteousness is our peace and holiness. By his doing and dying he—alone—enables God to be just and justifier!

Where does saving faith come from? “It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Yes! I do believe a man is justified by faith!

Christ Our Life

“This is the record,” declared the Apostle John; this is the sum and substance of all that is written and preached. God, out of his pure, free grace is pleased to give unto us eternal life.

This life is the spiritual life lost in the fall, life forever free from sin, sorrow, and death. This life is in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ! This life is not only purchased by him, but he is that life (Col. 3:4).

He that has the redeeming Christ, the interceding Christ, the indwelling Christ has life!

A Most Hated Truth

A pastor once declared to a friend, “I want you to know that I no longer believe in particular redemption.” When I heard this, I was shocked; but I was not surprised. I am always shocked when a man turns from the gospel of grace to something else, especially when that person has studied the Scriptures, the ancient fathers, the character of God, the nature of sinners, and the covenant mercies of God in Christ.

To deny effectual and particular redemption is to deny the very sum and substance of the gospel, which is substitution!

“Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
Are my beauty and my glorious dress.”

I am not surprised when certain preachers decide they will no longer preach particular redemption, for it is without question the most hated truth in Scripture.

Universal love and universal atonement are universally accepted by all of Adam’s fallen sons except those who, by the grace of God, have seen the Lord Jesus Christ as Isaiah saw his glory and spoke of him. The preacher who denies particular redemption will have little opposition, for he has taken the offense from the cross. All cults, sects, denominations, and religious promoters have this in common—they all believe there is a sense in which God loves all men, and Christ died for the sins of all men.

John Owen said, “If Christ died for all the sins of all men, then all men will be saved. If Christ died for some of the sins of all men, no one will be saved. But if Christ died (as the Scripture teaches) for all the sins of his elect, then his elect will be saved.”

A Prayer

“Lord, give me freedom from covetousness and envy. Let me be content with what you have given me. Let me say that others may have what they will, and I will not envy them, for I am satisfied with God’s place for me! Lord, give me such a love for Thee and my brethren that I can rejoice in their blessings and weep at their misfortunes; and the more joy and success they have, the more I am glad of it. It is true that my candle will not burn less brightly because another outshines it, and my work is not less important because another does and gives more. Oh, envy! Oh, covetousness! Oh, God, deliver me from them and impress upon my heart

that my inheritance in glory is something the world does not know and cannot give, so that I can look on everything in this world and say that it is nothing! Christ is all and in all.”

Baptism

The nature of baptism is a *burial*, which signifies not only our being dead with Christ and the blessings resulting from that union, but our being dead to the world and sin, even as Christ was done with the sins he bore. “How shall we who are dead live any longer therein?”

Our old man, who is with us from birth, can never be improved but must be crucified daily by the Spirit and grace of Christ. It remains with us, but we must not indulge it nor make provisions for it, but rather crucify it. We serve Christ, not sin!

A Purpose for Every Trial

Someone wrote to me recently and asked, “What was Paul’s thorn in the flesh?” I replied, “I do not know, but it really does not matter *what* it was; the important thing is *who* gave it and *why* he gave it.”

The Heavenly Father gave the thorn, and it was given for Paul’s spiritual good and well-being. The Lord’s answer to Paul’s prayer that the thorn be removed was satisfactory to Paul. “My grace is sufficient for thee!”

Our Lord has a purpose for ever trial I encounter, and he will fulfill that purpose for my good and his glory. I believe I have learned this: his grace, his gospel, and his strength are more manifest, more glorified, and more appreciated in my weakness and during trial. When I have nothing to say, nothing to contribute, nothing in which to find comfort or joy, I will look more to him and find all I need. Then, if infirmities and trials serve to make me look more to my Lord and have less confidence in and concern for this flesh, then I rejoice in infirmities!

Confession

To confess Christ with the mouth is to make a sincere, hearty confession to God before men that Christ Jesus is our Prophet to reveal God, our Priest to atone for us, our Lord to reign over us! When this is our

experience, we confess it in believer's baptism. To believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead is to:

1. Believe that he came to this as "God in the flesh" (Jn. 1:14).
2. Believe that he truly died on the cross for our sins (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
3. Believe that the sacrifice was effectual and sufficient, for God raised him from the dead (1 Cor. 15:13-22).

A True and Proper Confession

People who attend church services in this day expect the pastor to give an "invitation" or an "altar call" at the close of the service, during which the people are urged to confess Christ, present themselves for baptism, or join the church. But because we feel that this is neither scriptural nor wise we don't participate in such activities. The question is then asked, "How does one confess Christ?" or "How do believers who wish to be identified with this congregation do so?"

Very simply, if God has revealed to your heart the gospel of his grace in Christ Jesus, do as the eunuch of old; ask the pastor to baptize you! Believers confess faith in Christ today just as they always have, by following the Lord in baptism.

If you are a baptized believer who has been attending this church long enough to know what is preached and believed here and the Spirit of God has led you to unite with us and be identified with this congregation, tell the pastor that you wish to become a member of this church. You will be welcomed and received in sincere love and fellowship.

Be Not Unequally Yoked Together with Unbelievers

2 Corinthians 6:14

This metaphor is taken from horses or oxen which, being joined together by a common yoke, must walk and pull together in the same direction and with the same goal or have serious problems. The reason believers and unbelievers should not marry one another, form business partnerships, or conduct religious services and projects together is that they do not have the same principles, natures, nor goals.

They cannot walk together in harmony because they are not going in the same direction and they are not agreed on the vital issues of life, sin, salvation, God's glory, and the gospel of Christ. If a partnership is formed, a marriage entered into, or a close fellowship established, serious problems will very soon appear; for "What fellowship can righteousness have with unrighteousness? What communion can light have with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil?"

The Apostle Paul, in these verses, is not just setting forth rules and laws concerning communion with unbelievers. Paul is wondering why any believer would seek such alliances, and what possible agreement or fellowship could come of these relationships! Believers and unbelievers have very little, if anything, in common; certainly nothing that would promote peace and the glory of God.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:1-2).

Be Ready to Give an Answer

1 Peter 3:15

When a person asks you to tell him why you believe your sins are pardoned, why you believe that your name is written in heaven, and why you believe that you are not under condemnation but hope to reign eternally with Christ, be ready always to give him a Scriptural answer. It is because Christ Jesus is your righteousness before the law, Christ Jesus is your justifier by his blood, and Christ Jesus is your Mediator before God's throne!

Give that answer in a humble fashion, for we are what we are by the grace of God. Give that answer with "the fear of the Lord," being careful that he gets all the glory for your blessings. Give that answer courteously and respectfully. It may be that the person is a true seeker.

Embrace the Lord

Embrace the Lord Jesus Christ; for he, himself, is the source of mercy and the fountain of redemption. If we have him, we have all that he is!

Faith

The medium by which the gospel becomes the power of God is *faith*. Faith is a resilience upon the Lord Jesus Christ for all the blessings, benefits, ends, and purposes for which the gospel reveals him, such as pardon of sin, peace of conscience, strength for obedience, and eternal life.

It is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit through his word and presupposes a knowledge of him and of ourselves, of our emptiness and his fullness, of our unworthiness and his merits, of our weakness and his power.

The true believer believes, receives, and builds upon the person and word of Christ as the foundation of his hope; he enters by him as the only door to the knowledge, communion, and love of God; he feeds upon him as the only bread of life; he embraces him as his redemption, wisdom, and sanctification; he derives all his strength and comfort from him.

I Was Glad

I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.

Psalm 122:1

I was glad that I had a *desire* to go, that I had the strength to go, that I understood the words spoken there, that I *loved* the people assembled there, that I—the chief of sinners—should be permitted to come into his presence. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

First Things First

Joseph Alleine once said, “You begin at the wrong end if you first dispute about your election. Prove your conversion and your faith in Christ Jesus first, and then never doubt your election.” Whatever God’s eternal purposes be (which are secret), we can be sure of his promises. “He that believeth on the Son hath life.” “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”

Someone says, “Well, if I am elected, I shall be saved.” That may or may not be. But one thing is sure; if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you *shall* be saved! And you have been elected, because his people are made willing.

Free Indeed

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

John 8:36

Someone said, “We are most free when we are most his, and we never stand so straight as when we bow to him.” The greatest freedom any person can enjoy is to be the Lord’s servant. To know and to submit to his sovereignty, to love and to receive his covenant mercies, to believe and to rest in his blood and righteousness, to have and to walk in his precious promises, to trust and to accept his divine providence and his will for me, to lay hold of and to rejoice in his good hope through grace is to be free indeed!

God is true! All things are of him, through him, in him, and for his glory. All things are given to the Son of God, and all things are revealed to us by him. Christ is the truth! To know him is to know the truth, to be in him is to be in the truth, to have him is to have the truth, to walk in him is to walk in the truth and to be set free—free from the errors and fables of men, free from the traditions and ceremonies of religion, free from rituals and superstitions, free from the curse of the law, free to come boldly to the throne of grace in Christ and find mercy and grace!

“Free in Christ alone can wipe the tears
From our lamenting eyes,
Can raise our souls from guilty fears
To joy that never dies.

“Free in Christ can death itself outbrave,
And take its sting away.
Can souls to the utmost save
And them to heaven convey.”

Giving

The average person who gives money, gifts, or charity to others may think that this gift or whatever he gives should be regarded as loss, certainly not called assets nor investment nor gain. This is not so! Gifts, money, and alms given to others is no more loss than the seed planted by a farmer is loss. Anything given to others in the name of Christ, for the glory of our Lord, is not loss but gain in every way.

Our Lord said in Luke 6:38, “Give and it shall be given unto you...for with the same measure that you give withal it shall be given to you.” This is saying that God uses the same container or measure for his gifts to us as we use to give to others. The more generous the farmer is with the seed, the greater the harvest; and the more generous, loving and giving we are enabled to be, the greater the blessing.

No! Giving is not loss but great gain. A person may say, “I can’t afford to give.” If we have an understanding of the grace of God, we can’t afford not to give.

Go Home and Tell

“Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.”

Mark 5:19

The Lord had shown great mercy to this poor sinner, setting him free from demons and from sin. Now he tells him to go home to his family and friends and be the Lord’s *witness*.

Do not go home and begin to preach. Do not go home and take up the great doctrines of grace and expound them. Do not go home and strive to bring everyone to your views and beliefs. Do not go home and condemn all who do not see what you see. Go home and tell them what great things the Lord has done *for* you! Not what great things you have read or heard, but what great things you have experienced! This is the way to begin our witnessing.

There is never a more interesting story than that story a person has experienced, lived, and felt. If you would really interest others and get their attention, tell them what great things the Lord has done in you and for you!

Notice the Lord said, “Tell them what great things the Lord hath done.” It is a story of free grace. Not what we did, willed, or gave, but what he did for us by his own free, sovereign, and underserved love. We will not convince them nor change them any more than another man could convert us. But the Lord who did great things for us can do great things for them if he is so pleased. And he is pleased to use the faithful witness of those who go and tell “how great things the *Lord* hath done for thee.”

How Can God Be Just and Justify Sinners?

God is just! And a just God must punish sin! He cannot clear the guilty and allow the unrighteous to go free. Yet, we know that God is love! And a loving, merciful God must show mercy! Just as our holy God must punish sin, our merciful God must forgive sinners.

Then the question arises, “How can God be just and be the justifier of guilty sinner?” Where can mercy and truth meet together and both be satisfied? Where can holiness uncompromised and full forgiveness of sin meet without conflict and kiss each other? Where can a fallen man, laden with guilt and sin, meet a holy and just God and be received, accepted, and embraced as faultless, unblameable, and just?

The answer is, “At the cross.” God set forth his Son in the covenant, in the promise, in type and picture, and finally in person (made of woman) to be a propitiation, a substitute, a sin-offering, a mercy-seat, a sacrifice for all the sins of all believers. He took our sins and bore them in his body on the tree. All the sins of all believers of all ages were completely paid for in the death of the God-man!

Justice is satisfied; God’s law was honored in his life and God’s justice was fully satisfied in his death. Our God gives us assurance that Christ’s sacrifice was effectual when he raised him from the dead and exalted him to the right hand in glory. Only the gospel of our suffering substitute can answer the question, “How can God be just and justify sinners?”

I Shall Not Want

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psalm 23:1

What a promise! What a glorious inheritance! What a blessed comfort! Walk in it, believer; lie down upon it; trust in it; rest upon it. It will do for all the days of your life and be a soft pillow for your death!

When the news is not good, when your body is tired, when disappointment and doubts fill your mind, when the flesh is weary and weak and you lie upon your bed staring into the sleepless darkness asking yourself, “What shall I do?” hum to yourself these blessed words: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

Those words will be like a lullaby to your soul, and you will find rest.

Religion or Grace

Religion can change *habits*; it takes the grace of God to create a *new heart*.

I Trust Him

The mere knowledge of facts about the Bible, and even about the person and work of Christ, will not save us unless that knowledge leads us to really and truly trust our souls in the blessed Redeemer's hands.

Faith must act in this fashion: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he came to save sinners; and therefore, as a sinner, I rest myself on him. I know that his righteousness and blood justify the ungodly; therefore, I trust him to be both my righteousness and my redemption before God."

If

If I seek first the kingdom of God, if I am determined to win Christ and be found in him, if to be called of God and accepted in the Beloved is my diligent concern, if to grow in his grace and the knowledge of Christ is my primary object, I shall never fall; not that I shall never sin nor that I shall never fall into sin (for there is no man that lives and sins not), but I shall never totally fall from the mercy and grace of God in Christ.

Imitate Him

In his first epistle, John has a lot to say about love to Christ and one another. He declares that genuine love for the brethren is an evidence of redemption. It is not the cause, but the sign of life eternal; for no one truly loves Christ or others unless he is first regenerated by the Spirit of God.

For an understanding of perfect love, John sets before us the example of Christ, who laid down his life for us. This is the mark to which he bids us advance, forgetting ourselves and seeking the good and welfare of others.

It is certain that we are far from being equal with our Lord, but John recommends that we imitate him!

In Christ

It is in Christ that the Father is well-pleased; and only in Christ can he love, accept, and be pleased with me. I did not come to Christ on the basis of my works, nor am I kept in Christ on the basis of my works. I looked to him then for all things, and I look to him now for all things!

In Due Season

And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Galatians 6:9

Let us not lose heart, grow tired or discouraged, nor become careless and indifferent in our labor of love and works of faith; for it is required of God's servants that they be faithful at all times and under every condition.

God has a due season, or an appointed time, for his harvest and his judgements. This "well-doing" includes the bold preaching of his gospel of grace, faithfulness in worship and witness, persevering prayer for our friends and family, dependable support of our pastors and missionaries, endeavoring to keep the unity and fellowship of the church sweet, and aiding those who are sick and in need.

Disappointment and failure should never discourage us; for this, too, is a part of God's purpose.

In Everything Give Thanks

This, my friend, should be our desire and goal—to be able, in sincerity and truth, to rejoice in the Lord always, and in *everything* to give thanks!

Is the Message I Believe the Truth?

Someone may ask, "How may we know that the message preached is the true gospel of God?" I would reply:

1. Does it exalt the sovereign mercy of God as the only and entire reason and cause of salvation?
2. Does it humble man in the dust of inability and reveal his total spiritual deadness?

3. Does it provide a perfect righteousness before God's holiness and a suitable atonement and sacrifice before God's justice, enabling God to be just and justifier?
4. Does it shut every door but Christ, bar every way but Christ, destroy every hope but Christ, and present him, not only his finished work, but Christ himself as our life, hope, salvation, and acceptance before the Father?

If you answer, "Yes," this is "the true gospel of God."

Learning Times Are Leaning Times

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

Psalm 119:17

These trials are learning times! It is not so much learning new truths, for we are taught of God and we know whom we believe and what we believe; but times of trial and affliction serve to confirm by experience and dependence on our Lord whom and what we believe.

I know in times of health how frail I am; but in times of trouble I experience it and learn it better. I know the Lord is sovereign in all things and I am totally dependent on him for salvation, healing, life, and every mercy in Christ; but in times of trial and trouble I am again taught and learn by experience how dependent upon him I really am!

I look to Christ's righteousness and blood only at all times; but it is during those times when all human strength is gone and we face the very real possibility of departing this life, that by experience and confirmation of heart we can say, "He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved."

Lessons from The Prodigal Son

It is very possible that the prodigal son had some pangs of conscience, some distress and regrets when he was in the far country and wasting his substance with riotous living. He knew the law; he knew what he was doing was wrong, for he had been raised by a godly father. But it was not until he considered where he was, what he was, and how he was living in the light of his father's mercy and goodness that he turned from his way and started home.

The Scripture says, “He came to himself and said, how many hired servants of my father have bread *enough and to spare*, and I perish with hunger.” He realized that not only the sons but the hired servants of his father fared well and were treated with great mercy, while the world afforded him nothing but misery. David wrote of this saying, “I had rather be a doorkeeper in my father’s house than dwell as an owner of the world’s house.”

I am persuaded that a realization and understanding of the goodness, mercy, and grace of God will do more toward bringing a person to true repentance and a return to the Father than the law, conscience, and threats! The prodigal said, “I will arise from this hog pen and go to my generous and gracious father and confess that I have sinned against God and in his sight and I do not deserve to be a son anymore; just make me one of your hired servants, father, for your hired servants, your horses, and the dogs fare better than the kings and queens of this world.”

Let Us Season Our Talk and Thoughts with Grace and Gratitude

It is true that we live in a world of sin, that evil men and seducers wax worse; we are alarmed at the weakness and compromise in government and in the pulpit; honesty, integrity, and morality are forgotten virtues. But our Lord has not forgotten to be gracious, and he is plenteous in mercy. What praise and gratitude should fill our hearts to him, who has called us out of the darkness and sin that surrounds us and made us joint heirs with Christ in the kingdom of his Son.

Let us think and talk less of the evil and compromise about us and dwell more upon the grace and mercy of Christ to us! A gathering of preachers and people who know the living God ought to be a place where we talk about how good is the Lord, not how bad is the world; how merciful the Lord is to us, not how evil men treat us; how wonderful are his promises in Christ, not how weak and watered down is the present gospel.

The battle is the Lord’s, and it is being waged and won on every front. “We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” So let our conversation and spirit be as those who believe that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

Look Not Back

Too many in our day look back to the days of Spurgeon and Whitefield, living in the past more than in the present. However, I am quite sure that even men in those days wept for the days of Luther, Calvin, and Wycliffe; and men in Luther's day probably longed for the days of the apostles.

My friends, our Lord is the same, and he has faithful preachers of his word for you to hear and encourage!

Look unto Me

The command, "Look unto me and be ye saved," is not only the hope and strength of the seeking sinner, but it is the constant hope and strength of the believing sinner. I know my sins, but I rejoice in his grace. I know my weakness, but I rest in his strength. I know my emptiness, but I am complete in him.

Patience

Biblical patience is not rooted in fatalism that says everything is out of control. It is rooted in faith that says everything is in God's control.

Love One Another

While speaking to his disciples about abiding in him, as the branch abides in the vine, our Lord comes to the clearest proof and sign of this union with him: "That you love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12). Love for our Lord and one another is the principle commandment on which all the others rest. If we do abide in him and his word abides in us, we will love one another.

Mortification

Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

Colossians 3:2

Since we do sincerely seek things above, are mindful of our inheritance, and are children of the King, we must constantly put off these sinful desires that remain in our flesh. They are there, they are real, and they

must be faced with honesty and truth. We must put them off and refuse to allow them to continue or control us. Paul lists some of these fleshly temptations in this chapter and tells us to mortify (put off) these things and put on the new man.

This work of mortification is not perfected at once, nor is it ever completed in this life; for so much of this body of sin and death remains in us that we must make it our daily task to put down sinful thoughts, desires, and attitudes. The Lord's people are still very human and will have a real struggle with the old nature. However, he will give us grace and strength for every need. The very fact that we are continually exhorted in his word to mortify, crucify, and put off the old man indicates that the old man still lives, and the old, fleshly ways and thoughts must be contended with.

I suggest that the proper order in which to deal with our old man is first the heart, then the tongue, then the outward man. It cannot be reversed. "Out of the heart the mouth speaks," and, "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," and "cleanse first that which is within, that the outside may be clean."

Stoney Hearts

Men's hearts are spiritually hard. The world can win a man's heart, gold can win a man's heart, fame and popularity can win a man's heart; but there is not a minister living who can win a man's heart to God. We can reach the eye, the ear, and the head, but not the heart. The poet said,

"O Lord, speak with the voice that wakes the dead and bid the
sinner rise;
and make the guilty dread the death that never dies."

Neglect Not These Things

More and more I am made aware of the importance of worship, prayer, Bible study, and the fellowship of other believers during our earthly journey. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Mal. 3:16).

I need him, his word, and his people! By his grace I shall not forsake the assembly of believers for any reason; and being like Joshua, the

spokesman for my family, I can say, “As for me and *my house*, we will serve the Lord.”

To be involved with this world in such a way that week after week and Sunday after Sunday passes by without worship, instruction in righteousness, and fellowship with other believers is unthinkable! Such would be a miserable existence for his sheep.

Our Strength Is Not in Numbers

Sometimes the gospel of grace appears to be at a very low ebb and the believers so few, as in the case of Elijah. But while the elect of God are but a few compared to the mass of false professors and worldlings, yet we were not loved nor chosen because we are many; and we will not be rejected because we are few! The reason he loved us is found not in us, but in him; and he keeps us for the same reason!

Prove the Message

“Despise not prophesyings, prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1 Thessalonians 5:20-21

Do not despise, make light of, nor be indifferent to the messages of those who preach and teach the Word of God. I know that many in our day feel almost disgusted with the very word “preaching” because there are so many foolish and ignorant persons giving out worthless sermons from the pulpit. But let us prove all sermons and teaching by the Word of God and hold fast to that which is good! Some people are critical of everything; some embrace anything. The wise weigh all things by the Word of God and rejoice in that which is good.

Rejoice in The Lord

Any man or woman who claims continual, uninterrupted joy, rest, and peace in this world is either not telling the truth or has no connection with reality! True joy, rest, and peace are things we enjoy in Christ in the midst of troubles, afflictions, and infirmities.

Paul’s exhortation was “*rejoice in the Lord.*” When I am conscious of my weakness, failures, and sins, I rejoice in Christ, my righteousness.

When I am concerned about food, clothing, and shelter, I rejoice in Christ, my provider. When I am sick, Christ is my healer. When I am grieved, Christ is my comfort. When I am faced with death, Christ is my life!

So, it is not necessary to put on a false face and deceive others. We are still human; but our peace, rest, and joy is Christ.

Rest

When our God completed the creation of this world, it is said that he rested. This is not a rest from weariness, but simply declaring that there was no more to do; creation was finished! Likewise, our Lord Jesus “entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his works, as the Father did from his” (Heb. 4:10). He cried, “It is finished,” and the work of redemption was done!

Let us labor to enter into that rest. Cease from fretting, doubting, and rest in him as an infant rests in his mother’s arms. The more we learn of his love, his sufficiency, and his exaltation (for we are in him) the greater the rest. For there is no more to do; we are accepted in the Beloved.

Sanctification

In sanctification, do we wash and cleanse ourselves? No, it is grace that does it. It is “the beauty of the Lord our God; we are holy and beautiful through the righteousness he puts upon us.” Grace is laying aside our flimsy fig leaves and putting on the holiness of Christ. Works is laying aside the righteousness of Christ and reaching for the fig leaves.

Let the filthy leaves be despised and forgotten, for we are “accepted in the Beloved” in all that we need and in all that he requires!

Sons of Jacob

For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Malachi 3:6

The Lord loved Jacob. “Jacob have I loved.” The reason was not found in Jacob but in the Lord. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and gave his son to be our substitute.”

The Lord chose Jacob. “For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself” (Psa. 135:4). Has he not also chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world?

The Lord revealed himself to Jacob at Bethel. Jacob was running away, but God met him at Bethel (the house of God) and revealed to him his grace and mercy in Christ. Thank God, he crossed our paths and revealed his gospel to us.

The Lord gave Jacob a new name. “Thy name shall be no more Jacob (cheat) but Israel (a prince or son of God).” Beloved now, by his grace, we are sons of God! We have a new name and a new family.

The Lord led Jacob all the days of his life. “I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” Do we not have the same promise? He that has begun in you a good work will finish it in the day of Christ.

The Angel of the Covenant

Christ is the angel of the covenant, and you can find your part in that covenant by looking to him. Many want to know their election before they look to Christ. It cannot be! Look to Christ as a guilty sinner. Cast yourself on him for mercy and grace, and you will know your election; for all who are chosen are chosen in him. Apart from a saving interest in the Beloved, there is no hope!

Trials and Afflictions

We should never be surprised, disturbed, nor led astray by trials and afflictions for the sake of the gospel; for we know that trials are the appointed lot of all God’s people, appointed by God. It is the will of God that we should have them, patiently bear them, and profit by them.

The Lord Is My Shepherd

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

Psalm 23:1

I may be the weakest of the sheep, but I shall not want. I may be the dumbest, I may wander and stray, I may grow old and feeble; but I shall not want. I may not have all that I desire or wish, but I shall not want. I

will endure trial, sickness, and sorrow, I will walk through this valley of death, and I will one day stand before God's throne, but I shall not want. My Shepherd is able to save to the uttermost, to do all that he promised, to keep that which I have committed to him, and to present me faultless before his throne. I shall not want.

I shall not want for rest, for he maketh me to lie down in green pastures and leads me by the still waters. I shall not want for redemption, for he restoreth my soul. I shall not want for holiness, for he leads me in paths of righteousness. I shall not want for comfort, for he is with me. I shall not want for provisions, for he prepares my table. I shall not want for anything in this life nor in the life to come; for his goodness and mercy follow me, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever!

The Name of the Lord

Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Romans 10:13

The name of the Lord signifies the Lord Jesus Christ *himself*! "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father."

He who calls on the name of the Lord humbles himself before the Lord God! "Lord, if you will you can make me clean."

He who calls on the name of the Lord recognizes his power! "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him."

He who calls on the name of the Lord admits his own inability and need for the Lord's saving grace! "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

He who calls on the name of the Lord honors him as his God and rejoices in him as his Saviour. "My soul rejoices in God, my Saviour."

No one ever called upon the name of the Lord in this manner and went away unsaved!

The Righteous Servant

An old brother in Scotland was visited by his new pastor who said to him, "They tell me that you are a very old servant of Christ." "Servant of Christ? Yes, but it is Christ who serves this poor sinner. Forty-nine years he has served me." "How does Christ serve you?" asked the pastor. "Why,

he found me in the wilderness, brought me home on his shoulder, put a song in my heart, praise on my lips, gives me his word as my assurance, his Holy Spirit as my teacher and comforter, his presence as my joy, daily supplies my needs, forgives my sins, patiently endures my unfaithfulness, intercedes for me before the Father, and he will one day come for me to take me to eternal glory where I shall enjoy him forever. I am his servant, it is true; but I cannot say that it is I who serves him. No! it is Christ who serves me.”

There Is A Man in Glory

There is a *man* risen, ascended, and seated at the God’s right hand. Do you realize what this means? A man born of woman (but does not the word say, “How can he be clean that is born of woman?”), a *man* who died and was buried (but does not the word say, “It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgement?”)... but this *man* is no ordinary man; He is the God-Man.

He became a man that he might men redeem. He lived for us that perfect life and died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. The good news is that if there is a man in glory, accepted of God, there can be another and another and another and another... “He is able to save all who come to God by him.”

Upheld by The Grace of God

While we rejoice in God’s mercy which has saved us, in the blood of Christ which cleanses us, and in the faith with which he has blessed us, let us always remember that we cannot stand a moment longer than God upholds us. We are like a walking cane in a man’s hand; take away the hand and the cane will fall to the ground. We are like a small infant held up by a mother’s arms; if we are left on our own, we shall immediately fall.

The flesh says, “I shall fail;” the world says, “I will deceive;” the devil says, “I will sweep him away;” but God says, “I will keep him; I will never forsake him.” We desire inward holiness, we long to glorify Christ in our conduct and conversation, we strive to adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour; but always before us is the truth, “By the grace of God, I am what I am!”

Thoughts on Love

Someone once said, “The days grow shorter, the nights grow longer, the gravestones are thicker along the way; the life grows sadder, but love grows stronger for those who walk with Christ day by day.”

Another poet wrote, “Love covers a multitude of sins. It is like the painter who was hired to paint the picture of a friend who had a crooked eye. He painted the other side of his face.”

Longfellow wrote, “True love gives itself; it can never be bought at any price.”

Henry Shaw wrote, “True love looks through a telescope; jealousy and envy, through a microscope.”

Erasmus wrote, “Love that has nothing but beauty, gifts, and service to keep it in good health will soon drop dead.”

Someone else said, “Too often our first love and our last love is self-love. Our Lord exhorts us to love others as we love ourselves, and to love God more.”

We never know how much a person loves until we know how much he is willing to suffer and endure for the object of his love. Our Lord declared that it is the giving element that measures love. “For God so loved the world that he gave...” “Greater love hath no man than this, that he laid down his life...” In other words, the happiness of one who loves depends on the happiness and well-being of the one he loves.

Love is the greatest gift that God can give to us, for *himself* is love; and it is the greatest thing we can give to others. The Apostle calls it the *bond of perfectness*. It is the old, the new, the great commandment, and all the commandments; for it is the fulfilling of the law. Love produces all the other graces with no motivation but itself.

We Supply as We Are Supplied

I give thanks to God always for you all, remembering your work of faith and labor of love. You are continually called upon to help support efforts to preach the gospel, and you always respond willingly and generously. I’m grateful, but I remind myself and you—this is a blessing and a privilege the Lord has given to us; and we, by his grace, shall be faithful, knowing that he will supply all our needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

True Worship

The Samaritan woman said, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Our Lord replied, “The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”

Under the clear revelation of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, true worshippers of God do not worship God as the Samaritans, who had no divine rule or instruction for their tradition, nor as the hypocritical Jews, who rested in rituals, ceremonies, and form of religion, nor even as the sincere Jews, who followed the pattern of Moses in sincerity. But in and through the blood and righteousness of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, true worshippers of God all worship him in spirit, heart, and truth, as opposed to temples, ceremonies, and ordinances.

The question is not where we worship but how and whom we worship. God is not a corporeal being, made up of blood, flesh, and bones, being pleased with material and fleshly things, nor impressed with our form and lip worship. God is spirit and requires spiritual honor, reverence, love, and trust of which he is worthy!

So, whether we gather together or separately, pray publicly or privately, we worship our God, offer sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving, and commitment to him through our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the spirit of faith, sincerity, and the truth as it is in Christ.

We Have an Advocate

1 John 2:1

John says, “I write unto you that you sin not.” He does not hold out the possibility that any of us can be totally free from sin. This would be contrary to his own words in I John 1:8-10. But he is saying, “I write this epistle to you that you might not indulge the flesh, walk in disobedience, and behave like unregenerate men.” The will of God is our sanctification and holiness in spirit, word, and deed. The true grace of God in a man’s heart does not condone nor excuse sin but condemns it and gives him a continuous desire to be like Christ and glorify his Lord.

“And if any man sin...” as every man does, even those who believe and love Christ. As much as a believer hates sin and seeks to avoid it, he is still in the flesh and in the world. When a believer sins, he has an

Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who makes intercession for him.

He is the mercy-seat, the substitute, the sin-offering, and the Mediator for all his people. Because of him, the Father forgives all our sins—past, present, and future. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”

We Will Depart When the Time Comes

Although we are not of this world and are despised and rejected by the enemies of the gospel in this world, the Saviour does not ask the Father to take us out of this world; for we have a work to do, a gospel to preach, and our God to glorify. It is for his glory, the salvation of his elect, and the comfort and edification of his church that you and I remain in this world.

We will be called away to glory in his own time. Until then let us be about our Father’s business with the complete confidence that he has redeemed us, will never forsake us, makes intercession for us, and will call us to Himself when it is time.

My friend, Tim James, often closes his letters with these words, “I’ll see you when it is time.” As the shadows lengthen and our steps are a bit slower, we will continue to do what he has called us to do and “we will see him when it is time.”

Why Will You Die?

Our God is infinitely just, and his holiness and justice demand that sin be punished. There is no need to list all the attributes of God to prove this. You know that it is true. But our God is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He delights to show that mercy and grace to sinners in Christ Jesus.

Then, “Why will ye die?” Can you not cry with the publican, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner?” Can you now, as the thief, ask to be remembered by the Lord when he makes up his jewels? Can you not say, “Though I have sinned greatly, I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for sinners like me; and I commit my soul to him”?

“My faith looks back to see
The burden he did bear;
When hanging on the cursed tree,
I know my guilt was there.”

If you can, I have this to say to you; “There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.”

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1993

Self-Righteousness

Self-righteousness is the greatest idol of the human heart, the idol which man loves most and God hates the most. Even the most faithful have to guard against self-righteousness, for we are always trying to find something in ourselves to gain God's favor. We have a tendency either to think little of our sins or too much of our works; or we begin to admire our graces and gifts, forgetting who gave them. God hates self-righteousness the most because it comes in the place of Christ, sits on Christ's throne, and robs Christ of his glory.

Christ, The Way

Our Lord declared, "I am the way; no man cometh to the Father but by me!" The scriptures plainly set forth the fact that because of our sin, we are separated from God and, of ourselves, there is no way back to God! The Lord taught this to Adam early; for when he "drove out the man, he placed a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24). There is no way back to life. But Christ, our Lord, has come to bring us to God. How shall he (as the God-man) deal with that sword of wrath and justice? Shall he command it to disappear? Shall he find a way around it? No! He will be the "just God and Saviour" and take that sword into his own heart and pour out his soul unto death to bring many to God. The way to God is opened, for Christ is the way! God taught Israel the impossibility of any man's coming to him apart from Christ when he revealed his glory upon the mercy-seat in the Holy of Holies and forbade any man to enter except the High Priest once a year with the blood atonement. But Christ has come to bring us to God, not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood he entered once into the holy place and obtained eternal redemption for us. Now the veil is rent, the way is opened, and we are commanded to come boldly into his presence by Christ, the way!

The Gospel of The Atonement!

In most circles today, it is unfashionable to believe in the gospel of the atonement! Modern culture has altered the Bible and theology until there is no real, effectual atonement left. Most folks today are too intellectual, too advanced, and too good to look to the Christ of the cross. As for me, like Abel of old, I look to the Lamb; like Rahab, I tie the scarlet line in my window; and like Edward Mote, I say, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness." In the midst of a thousand "new" gospels, that aren't worth the time to mention them, I hold to the gospel of God's grace in Christ, which declares, "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." With Moses and Israel, I put the blood on the door. If no one else sees it, God will! And he said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

Doctrine

As a doctrine is not true because I believe it or because you believe it; it is true only if God says it! I do not ask whether you believe what I preach; perhaps you do not. But I ask you to search the Scriptures and determine whether these things be so. I am not afraid to submit my belief in God's immutable sovereignty, man's total fall and ruin, God's elective grace, Christ's effectual atonement, the Spirit's invincible call, and the perseverance of the sheep to the word of God!

God Hath Chosen the Base

Repeated visits to the poor, uneducated mission fields will remind us that a person can repent who cannot define the word, and a person can believe on the Lord Jesus who cannot explain what true faith is or is not, and a person can truly rest in Christ who does not know the meaning of the word covenant!

Blood Before the Lord

Note in scripture how many times the blood is said to be "Before the Lord." Whether any man saw it or not was of small account, for it was offered for sin "Before the Lord." When the Passover lamb was slain in

Egypt, where was the blood placed? It was on the outside of the door “before the Lord.” He said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.”

The suffering and death of Christ on behalf of his people was “Before the Lord,” unto the Lord, to declare the Lord's righteousness, to satisfy the Lord's justice, to fulfill the Lord's purpose, to glorify the Lord's character, to enable the Lord to be both just and justifier!

The atonement does not change the nature and character of God, but rather the atonement honors and magnifies the character of God. The death of Christ is not the cause of God's love, but the result of it. God is not merciful because Christ died; Christ died because God is merciful. In order that every attribute might be expressed, glorified, and honored, God gave his Son to be the Saviour of the chosen people! Thank God we have an atonement “before the Lord.”

The Greatest Enemies

You will find that it is not your pagan neighbors and relatives who hate the gospel of free and sovereign grace the most. It is your religious acquaintances who despise sovereign mercy in Christ. The greatest enemies of Christ Jesus have always been those who boasted of their knowledge of God and the Bible. It was in the synagogue that the death of Christ was planned and plotted; it was in the churches and the cathedrals that the reformers were tried and burned; it is in the seminaries and pulpits that the free grace of God is denied.

We Preach Christ Crucified

*The Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom,
but we preach Christ crucified.*

1 Corinthians 1:22-23.

It is the same today, men want clever preachers, not Christ preachers; reason, not revelation; their minds challenged, not their hearts pricked. The wisdom of this world says, “If you wish to reach the people of this day, you must not be dogmatic; share, discuss, exchange ideas, counsel people, but don't preach!” I hear people say, “If you would enlist today's youth, you must adapt to their life-style and their language; pick up the rock beat, use comedy, puppets, and social entertainment; don't preach to them!” Others insist that if you would win the support and interest of

people of education, influence, and wealth, you must curb your Calvinism, soften your stand on substitution, and don't preach Christ to them!

Can you imagine the Apostle Paul compromising with this so-called "wisdom of the world"? No! His reply to what men require and seek is, "we preach Christ and him crucified." I desire to reach, enlist, and minister to young and old, wise and unwise, but not at the expense of God's glory and truth. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21); and if depravity offends men's dignity, revelation offends their wisdom, and substitution offends their pride, so be it!

I find God's prophets, apostles, and preachers, who have been used of God in past years, to be compassionate men but never compromisers, to be comforters but never cowards. They were willing to take the offense out of their manners but never out of their message. They all preached Christ and him crucified.

Adorn the Doctrine

When a person wears a garment which is not appropriate nor suitable for the occasion nor for the rank and station of the wearer, we often say, "That's not very becoming for you." When one noted for wisdom and prudence speaks or acts in a questionable manner, we say, "That's not very becoming for you."

Paul, writing in Titus 2:1, exhorts all believers to speak, act, dress, and live in a way that is becoming (appropriate and suitable) to what we believe! As a friend of mine often says, "Remember who you are and whose you are." We are sons and daughters of the King of kings, who are on this earth to glorify our Father and our Lord. In this book Paul uses two other words in regard to our walk and works. He says in Titus 2:10, "Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;" decorate or dress the message of grace in graciousness and godliness. Then in Titus 3:8 Paul tells us to "be careful to maintain good works."

The Sinner's Refuge

The Lord instructed Israel to appoint six cities of refuge. The person who killed another accidentally or unwittingly could flee to one of these cities and state his case to the elders. The elders were to take him in, give him a place to dwell among them; and when the avenger of blood came looking for him, they were not to deliver him into his hands, but the slayer could

abide in safety. These cities of refuge are a type of Christ, who is the sinner's refuge. In him we are received, given an eternal dwelling place, protected, accepted, and delivered from all charges or condemnation.

But, like all types and pictures, if taken too far or exalted too much, this type breaks down pitifully. Let us learn that no creature can represent Christ Jesus perfectly, and no type can do justice to his person and work.

There were six cities of refuge. There is only one Redeemer.

These cities only protected from physical death; Christ delivers us from spiritual and eternal death.

These cities required physical exertion and running to reach them. No physical move, effort, nor deed is necessary to come to Christ—only heart faith!

These cities were only for those who by accident or chance killed someone; but Christ, our Lord, is the refuge and redeemer of willful sinners. He died for the ungodly and welcomes the chief of sinners to come to him for refuge.

This Treasure

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

2 Corinthians 4:7

There is no doubt that Paul is speaking of himself and other elders, pastors, and missionaries.

“*This treasure*” is our gospel, that glorious good news of a perfect righteousness before God in Christ, the forgiveness of all sin through his blood, and an inheritance reserved in heaven for all believers. This gospel we preach in the power of God to save.

“*We have this treasure in us;*” in our minds to understand how God in Christ can be just and justifier; in our hearts to receive, believe, and love Christ Jesus, our Redeemer; in our mouths to preach it without compromise nor covetousness; in our hands to take it to the far corners of this earth. Paul, in Gal. 1, said, “God revealed his Son IN me.” This treasure is in us.

“*In earthen vessels.*” This treasure of treasures is not in a vessel of pure gold, valuable and perfected. This treasure is not in a vessel of steel, hard, strong, and immovable. This treasure is not in a vessel of fine wood, polished without stain to be admired. God has put this treasure in earthen vessels (clay pots), frail dust from the earth and destined to return to the

same, that anything of power, excellence, or eternal which is accomplished through these pots may be ascribed to his person, power, and purpose, and not to the vessel. Thank God for all of his true servants, but thank God we are not dependent on them for any grace. They shall be saved even as we are saved--in Christ!

Helping Others

Generous people do not lose by helping others, for our Lord is able to make all sorts of blessings (both spiritual and temporal) come their way. Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 9:7-8, "If you are able to give cheerfully, God is able to make all grace abound toward you so that you will have all sufficiency in all things to abound in good works." And David wrote in Psa.112:9, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor and needy; his righteousness endureth forever and his horn shall be exalted with honor." These scriptures are declaring that the benevolent person who is merciful, generous, and kind to others shall be blessed of God to do even more for his glory.

Heart Faith

I brought a message last Sunday night from Romans 12. What I tried to set forth in the message is the importance of grace experienced as well as grace believed. Paul, in the first part of Romans and Ephesians, deals with the great doctrines of free and sovereign grace; but in the last chapters of each book, he writes about our walk, talk, and conduct, which should be according to and becoming of the grace we believe. Dearly beloved, I must remind you that it is quite possible to be orthodox in the head but unregenerate in heart! Heart faith will produce heart grace! Heart faith will produce heart love and the spirit, attitude, and labors of love. It is safe to say that the general tenor of a person's attitude and conduct away from church reveals the true condition of his heart and his relationship with Christ.

But God Can

If a man offend not in word, the same is a perfect [mature] man.

James 3:2

James warns us not to rush eagerly and aspire to be teachers of the scriptures, for teachers and preachers shall be judged with greater severity than others. Then he says, “We all, without exception (teachers, pupils, preachers), fall and offend in many ways.” The ones who teach and the ones who are taught have many infirmities, and the tongue is usually the major source of offense. If a person can learn to control his tongue, he is a mature believer. If a person can learn when to speak, what to speak, and how to speak for the glory of God and the good of the church, that person manifests spiritual maturity!

The tongue is a small member of the body; but, like the small bit in a horse's mouth, the small rudder on a ship, and the small match, it can produce amazing, astounding, sometimes disastrous, sometimes marvelous results.

Men have succeeded in taming beasts, birds, serpents, and even the fish of the sea; but they have not had much success with their tongues. No human can tame the tongue, but God can. The grace of God can not only subdue it and tame it, but can make it an instrument for God's glory and the good of his church. When the grace of God acts on the heart, it begins to subdue the tongue.

The Scriptures - Our Rule of Faith and Practice

We must never imagine that all that our Lord did and said is recorded in the Bible or in any other book. If all the miracles he did, sermons he preached, works he performed, and words he spoke had been written in books, John said, “The world itself could not contain the books that must be written;” for he is from everlasting to everlasting. However, God has been pleased to have written all that is necessary and needful for us to know concerning the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may know him, believe him, and find in him eternal life and glory (1 John 5:20).

The Battle Still Rages

Rather than repenting and coming to God by faith, Cain was angry with God and with his brother who believed God; so he slew his brother. The first animal blood shed on earth was to cover man's nakedness (a picture of Christ), and the first human blood shed on the earth was over whether a sinner should come to God by grace or by works. The battle still rages. The way of Cain still hates the way of Christ alone.

Owe No Man Anything

“Blow, blow, thou winter wind; Thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude.” I hesitate to try to add anything to these powerful words from the pen of Shakespeare, except to call attention to them and encourage all of us to give thanks more often, not only to our Lord for his many mercies, but also to show our appreciation and gratitude to our brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, parents and teachers. “I am a debtor,” said Paul; and in Rom. 13:7-8 he counsels us to pay our debts of tribute, revenue, respect, honor, and love to all to whom these are due! “Owe no man anything” does not refer to money (in this passage) but to love, honor, and gratitude. Make regular payments and do not have overdue debts. The bank does not need your money nearly so much as that friend needs your encouragement and gratitude. “Pay that thou owest.”

Simplicity That is in Christ

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:3

This godly jealousy in Paul was a mixture of love and fear. He loved them, deeply desired their eternal good, and feared lest they should be corrupted by these deceivers. Satan used the serpent to seduce Eve from her obedience to God (Gen. 3:1-6). He was crafty, skillful, and deceptive, as are those men who do his bidding under the guise of righteousness (vs. 13-15). Believers are complete in Christ, who, of God, is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Satan's one goal is to corrupt the mind and turn the heart away from this singleness or

simplicity of Christ. It matters not to him if it be law, morality, tradition, ceremony, or whatever (good or bad), just so there is a rival for Christ's preeminence and his sufficiency. Christ plus anything in redemption is not the gospel of God's glory and grace (Col. 2:9-10) but is another gospel (Gal. 1:6-7). The foundation of the great Reformation was the scriptures alone, grace alone, and Christ alone. Nothing needs to nor should be added to these (Rom. 5:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:21). In Christ believers are perfectly justified and righteous before the Father.

Good Stewards

The Lord has made us stewards of his grace and of the gifts of his grace, whether they be spiritual or material. Let us be good stewards, putting to use for his glory and the happiness of others all that passes through our hearts and hands. Someone may say, "But I am not talented nor rich." We are responsible on a smaller scale for what God has put into our hands. What I possess (little or much) belongs to him, and I resolve to use it for his glory and the good of others!

Children of God

We are not the children of God because we are the children of Abraham, nor because we are the children of believers, not because we are the descendants of any flesh. We are the children of God who are children of the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus, who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with the heart. Let us pray for our children and make clear to them that each must seek Christ and receive him in his own heart.

Be Content

A long while ago I was visiting in a home and one of the children kept crying about something. I heard the mother say, "You are crying for nothing; and if you don't stop, I will give you something to really cry about." Is this not too often true of us, the children of God? We cry, fret, and complain over nothing. Oh, I know that our inconveniences, difficulties, and troubles do seem to be large at times; but compared to what we are, what we have, and what trials we could have, they are nothing! How quickly I would stop my crying if my Lord, like this

mother, should say, "You are crying for nothing; and if you do not stop, I will give you a sorrow, a trial, a heartache to really cry about." What did the Apostle Paul say? "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, to be content." Again, "Be content with what you have and avoid covetousness." Lord, teach us to rest in thee, to wait upon thee, and to rejoice in thee!

Newton's Dying Thoughts

In the last few months of his life, John Newton, author of the famous old hymn "Amazing Grace," became so weak that he had to stop preaching and eventually was confined to his bed. His friends said that he never feared age nor death. To a close friend he wrote, "Through God's grace I am perfectly well, yet laboring under a growing disorder for which there is no cure--old age. But I am glad for this disease, for who would live always in such a world as this?"

One day, with a feeble smile, he told a friend, "I am like a person going on a journey on a stagecoach, who expects its arrival every hour and is frequently looking out the window for it." Later he said, "I am packed and sealed and waiting for the post." One day he said, "What a thing it is to live under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty!"

Shortly before he died, he told visiting friends, "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Saviour." John Newton died on a Monday evening, Dec. 21, 1807, at the age of eighty-two.

Our Mediator

John Owen, talking to young Richard Davis, asked this question: "Young man, in what manner do you hope to go to God?" Mr. Davis replied, "Through the Mediator, Jesus Christ." John Owen said, "My friend, that is easily said, but I assure you that it is quite another thing to really go to God through the Mediator, Jesus Christ, than most people who use that expression realize." He continued, "Mr. Davis, I, myself, preached Jesus Christ, the Mediator, several years while I had very little, if any, experimental knowledge of what it really meant to go to God through the Mediator. But God, in his grace, was pleased to visit me with great affliction. I was literally brought to the mouth of the grave, my soul was

oppressed with horror and darkness, but God relieved my spirit through a powerful application of Psalm 130, from which I received special instruction, peace, and comfort in drawing nigh to God through our Mediator.”

Psalms of Blessing

Martin Luther once said, “There are three psalms that are the greatest blessing to me--Psalm 32, Psalm 51, and Psalm 130.” When he was at Coburg going through deep affliction and persecution, he said to his friends, “Come, let us sing Psalm 130 and wait and hope in the Lord.”

Types and Shadows

Moses gave not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven...I am the bread of life.

John 6:32

Nothing that Moses gave, wrote, nor did can satisfy our God nor give life to a sinner. All of the ceremonies, sacrifices, ordinances, days, and feasts were but types and shadows of the Redeemer. Moses himself did not trust nor rest in them; he wrote of Christ! Don't take anyone to Moses nor to his law except to teach Christ (Gal. 2:16).

Serving God

We must serve our Lord in his way and in his strength, or he will never use us for his glory. That which we do unaided by Divine leadership and strength will prove to be worthless. There must be a consciousness of ignorance and weakness before there will be any victories!

Trust and Rest

I once heard someone say, “I am a born worrywart.” This is true of all of us. Whatever failure or sin we have, we were born with it. But since we have been born again in Christ by the grace of God, we have certain qualities and graces we did not have before. One of these graces is trust. We trust our Heavenly Father as a small child trusts his earthly father. Our

Heavenly Father loves us much more than we are capable of loving our children, and he has all power and authority over any demon or danger we may encounter! A natural father does not have such power and is limited in his ability to protect or care for the child of his love.

Do you and I not realize that no person, no power, no disease, no death can touch one of his own without his permission? Did not Satan himself say of Job, “God, have you not put a hedge about him, and his house, and all that he has, on every side?” Did not David write, “A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come near you”? Dear believer, whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever danger you may imagine, trust your Father and rest in his arms. “He will not leave you nor forsake you, so that you may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, I will not fear.”

The Results of True Preaching

I was able to preach a few days ago with considerable liberty on a certain subject, and I commented to my wife, “The Lord had a hearer out there tonight, one whom he will be pleased to bring to himself or bless with a growth in grace; for I preached the message with power and liberty of thought and word.” She asked, “What do you mean?” “Oh, it is true that the gift to preach, knowledge of the word and doctrines, the open door to preach, and the results of our preaching are all of our Lord, always! We preach often and we preach the truth always; but there are times we preach powerfully in the Spirit of God; and we are aware of those times and we can be sure that those are the times there is a Lydia, a eunuch, a Cornelius in the audience.” Revival is simply this experience on a larger scale!

Who Gets the Glory?

If you wish to know if the gospel you are hearing preached is the gospel of God, ask yourself this question, “Who gets the glory?” If you wish to know whether your religious experience is of the flesh or of the Lord, ask the same question, “Who gets the glory?” Also examine all of our gifts, works, and missionary efforts by the same rule, “Who gets the glory?” God will not share his glory! That which is OF God, from God, and for God’s glory will be blessed with his presence and power. “That no flesh should glory in his presence...that according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1:29, 31).

Our Aim

Are we trying to win the favor of man or of God? Do we seek to be men-pleasers? If we are seeking the favor and approval of men, we are not the bondservants of Jesus Christ. Our aim is to be true to the word of God, and in doing so we will be true to our hearers. This gospel of the free grace of God is glorifying to God and honoring to all of his excellent attributes-- His love and mercy, his infinite wisdom, his righteous justice, and his immutable holiness. This gospel of the free grace of God in Christ is the only hope that sinful, corrupt men have; for if righteousness comes by any obedience to the law at all, not only did Christ die in vain, but no son of Adam has any hope of being saved.

What he Does Not Say

Often, I hear people say of certain radio, television, and noted preachers, "Well, he uses the Bible and I have heard him say some good things." Charles Spurgeon had a reply for this type of thinking. He said, "Many preachers today say a number of good things. But what a man really believes is most often revealed by what he does not say and by what he says after he has said the good things. What he does not say most often is that which is essential to God's glory, and what he calls upon men to do often glorifies men."

Be Not Conformed to This World

And be not conformed to this world.

Romans 12:2

The word "world" means the nature, character, opinions, goals, and attitudes of unbelieving people.

The worldly man seeks the praise of men; the believer seeks the praise of God.

The worldly man thinks only of himself; the believer thinks of others.

The worldly man cares for the body; the believer cares for his soul.

The worldly man wants people to know and exalt him; the believer wants to know the Lord and glorify him.

The worldly man looks upon that which is seen; the believer lives for that which is unseen.

The worldly man is concerned first for what he shall eat, drink, and wear; the believer seeks first the kingdom of God.

How Do We Glorify God?

That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God.

Romans 15:6

1. He is glorified when the perfections of his nature are recognized and exalted.
2. He is glorified when the work of his hands is praised.
3. He is glorified when his mercy and grace in Christ are received and loved.
4. He is glorified when grateful sinners approach him in worship and thanksgiving.
5. He is glorified when the walk, talk and conduct of his people are agreeable to his calling.
6. He will be glorified when all things in Christ are subdued unto him.

Be Kind to Others

No part of the gospel is to be sacrificed for peace. No part of the revealed word of God is to be denied to keep others happy. This would certainly not be for anyone's good. But in the matter of personality, temperament, things indifferent, food and drink, days and customs, we should be willing to sacrifice our rights and convictions to make others comfortable and happy, while seeking to instruct them in the word. Our Lord was patient with the very human disciples while they were "growing up." We babes should be as kind to others (Eph. 4:32).

We Must Preach and Hear the Gospel

The Apostle said, "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of." I'm just a sinner saved by the grace of God. All that I have, know, and hope to be is by the grace of God. "Necessity is laid upon me"—I must preach the gospel, for I love the gospel, I am saved by the gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only gospel, and all men need to have and believe the gospel. "Yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."

Now, as a hearer of the gospel, can you say the same thing that the preacher of the gospel said?

1. "If I hear and believe the gospel, I have nothing to glory of." It is the gift of God.
2. "Necessity is laid upon me; I must hear and believe the gospel." How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?
3. "Woe is unto me if I do not hear and believe the gospel." Our Lord said, "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life."

A Blessing to Provide

Our traveling preachers and missionaries have gone out from home and family for Christ's sake and are not supported by the Gentiles and heathen to whom they preach, taking nothing from them. So we ourselves ought to support such people (to welcome and provide for them) in order that we be fellow-laborers and helpers in the truth. It is a great privilege to preach the gospel and an equal privilege and blessing to provide for those who preach it, for in doing so we also minister the gospel.

See If It Is in The Bible

I believe and I teach that all men by nature are lost by Adam's fall. See whether that be true or not. I hold that men have so gone astray that no man either will nor can come to Christ except the Father draw him. If I be wrong, find me out. I believe that God, before all worlds, chose to himself a people, whom no man can number, for whom the Saviour died, to whom the Holy Spirit is given, and who will infallibly be saved.

You may dislike that doctrine; I do not care; see if it is not in the Bible. See if it does not there declare that we are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," etc. I believe that every elect child of God must assuredly be brought by converting grace from the ruins of the fall and must assuredly be "kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation," beyond the hazard of ever totally falling away. If I be wrong there, get your Bibles out and refute me in your own houses.

I hold it to be a fact that every man who is converted will lead a holy life, and yet at the same time will put no dependence on his holy life but trust only in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

And I hold that every man that believes is in duty bound to be immersed. I hold that baptism of infants to be a lie and a heresy; but I claim for that great ordinance of God, Believer's Baptism, that it should have the examination of scripture. I hold that to none but believers may

immersion be given and that all believers are in duty bound to be immersed. If I am wrong, well and good; do not believe me; but if I am right, obey the word with reverence. I will have no error, even upon a point which some men think to be unimportant; for a grain of truth is a diamond, and a grain of error may be of serious consequence to us, to our injury and hurt. I hold, then, that none but believers have any right to the Lord's supper, that it is wrong to give the Lord's Supper indiscriminately to all, and that none but Christians have a right either to the doctrines, the benefits, or the ordinances of God's house.

In Everything Give Thanks

To be able to praise God equally in the valley of trial as on the mountain of joy ought to be the desire of every believer. Paul sounds this note in 1 Thess. 5:18, "In everything give thanks; for this (whatever it be if you are in Christ) is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Forgive One Another

Believers are exhorted by the Apostle Paul to forgive one another. Yes, in the presence of Christ and with the approval of Christ and after the example of Christ—forgive! "Lest Satan should get the advantage over us, for we are not ignorant of his devices and intentions" (2 Cor. 2:10-11).

Satan will use any means against the Lord Jesus and his church (even the Apostle Peter, to whom Christ said, "Get thee behind me, Satan"). If Satan can foster division, an unforgiving spirit, harsh feelings, or pride among believers, he will do it! He will, under pretense of showing indignation against sin or pretending to contend for certain doctrines or under pretense of caring for the purity and discipline of the church, encourage a strict, harsh attitude toward offenders, destroy unity and fellowship, and convince men that they are serving God in their self-righteous attitudes. One sure and certain way to be in the will of God and not to be used by the enemy is to love one another and forgive one another (Eph. 4:32)!

Dead to the World

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.

Galatians 6:14

How is a believer dead to the world when he lives in the world, works a regular job, raises a family, and owns property in the world? A young student asked his Bible teacher this same question. The teacher sent him out to the graveside of a friend with instructions to criticize the dead friend, harass him, find fault, and then praise him with glowing terms and brag on him to excess. Upon his return, the teacher asked, "What did your friend say when you criticized him?" "Nothing." "How did he react when you praised him?" "It made no difference to him; he is dead." "That is what it means to be dead to this world," said the teacher. "Its applause means nothing, and its hatred means nothing.

We neither admire the people of the world nor do we fear them. The riches of this world are but the fancy of fools, and the honors of this world mean little or nothing; for to be a child of God is the highest calling. The religious traditions and ceremonies of the world have no attraction nor meaning when Christ is all! That which was once important to us we now consider loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, our Lord. This spiritual life in Christ cannot be explained; it must be experienced.

God Will Provide

That was my subject on television today, and the message was such a blessing to me as I prepared it and preached it! Oh, that our Lord would increase our faith and enable us to face each day, each trial, and each doubt with the confidence of Abraham, "My son, God will provide." I know that the chief reference here is to the lamb, our sin-offering; God will provide the Lamb, Christ Jesus; God will provide himself, the Lamb; for Christ Jesus is God. God will provide the Lamb for himself, to satisfy his own justice and honor his own law. But this statement is the watchword of every believer for every occasion! "God will provide." May our Lord give us such confidence and comfort in his constant mercy and grace that we can meet every need with this immediate response, "My son, God will provide." Too often we get around to this position rather late,

don't we? The real peace and rest is in being confident that our Lord will provide before he actually does, just as Abraham was.

Responsibility and Privilege

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 13:17

Those who “have the rule” are faithful pastors and elders.

How does one “obey them?” By attending to the word preached by them, by receiving the word, by regarding and respecting their counsel, advice, and rebuke.

If we receive their message and are faithful to Christ, the faithful minister goes about his work with joy and not grief; and in that great day, when he shall be a witness to your final end, that, too, will bring him joy and not grief.

To whom does an elder give account? To his own conscience (for a true preacher is not covetous of gain or fame), to the church to whom he ministers, and to the Lord for whom he speaks. What a responsibility! But what a privilege!

Love

Love rejoices not in the fall and failure of others, but rejoices in goodness and truth. Love is never glad when others go wrong. What a man is, he wishes others to be. If he is evil, he delights to point to evil in others.

We are exhorted in 1 Pet. 3:8 to “Love as brethren.” How do brethren love? They love all of the believers. They love as Christ loved us--freely. They love without hypocrisy, in deed, not in word only. They love continually, for true love never fails. How will this love be expressed? In praying for one another, in forgiving one another, in sharing with one another both temporal and spiritual needs, and in seeking out one another for fellowship and encouragement.

Public Worship

I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.

Psalm 122:1

I can and do worship the Lord anywhere; I can pray and rejoice in God's mercy in Christ anywhere; I can read the word and meditate upon his grace anywhere; but there is a time and a place (referred to as the house of God) where the people of God gather in his name each week to worship, pray, preach his Word, and encourage one another. He promised to be in their midst. They meet to seek his face, his blessings, and to hear the word he has given his servant for them at that time. They also come with their children to be identified individually and as families with the Lord and his kingdom. They come to praise him in joy and seek his comfort in their sorrows. For all these reasons, I am glad when that day dawns and that time approaches and I can meet my true family in my Father's house. I must be honest, as one called of God to speak for him; I cannot believe for one moment that those who forsake this sacred assembly and find every excuse not to be there (whatever the reason) have a true love and regard for our blessed Redeemer.

Christ Our Rule of Faith

Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

1 John 2:3

Throughout this earthly journey, believers struggle with inward sin, doubts, fears, trials, and attacks from Satan, and are often heard to say with Newton:

“Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it gives me anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his or am I not?”

John says this is how we discern daily by experience that we are coming to know him, if we bear in mind, observe and practice the teachings, precepts, and words of our Lord Jesus (Matt. 22:37-40; John 13:34-35).

The true believer loves the words and commandments of Christ in regard to faith, love, forgiveness, humility, works of charity, kindness, giving, witnessing, and all that relates to our daily walk (1 John 5:3). The love of Christ and the words of Christ are our rule of faith.

Let us Grow Up into Him

I heard someone say, “I get so weary of trying not to offend people. It seems as if I am forever on guard and upset lest I say something, do something, or have something which offends someone!” Beloved, this ought not to be said about believers. But I can identify with what my friend said; for the one thing I dislike about the ministry, and the one thing that will one day cause me to rejoice when I am no longer involved daily in it is the constant pressure of “trying to be all things to all people” (1 Cor. 9: 19-23). The people of the world are naturally offended by our gospel, by our strong commitment to sovereign grace, and by the fact that we cannot walk with them in their religious and other activities. But the love believers share “doth NOT behave itself unbecomingly, is not self-seeking, is not easily provoked, touchy, fretful, and offended” (1 Cor. 13:5). Am I? Are you a problem-child? A cause for tension, pressure, and sleepless nights? Or are we an encouragement, comfort, and delight to be around? Paul said in Eph. 4:15, “Let us all grow up into him in all things.”

A solemn prayer prayed by George Gillespie during a time of great conflict with those who would compromise the gospel of God: “Lord, send light. Lord, give assistance. Lord, defend thine own cause.”

The Preacher

There are more lofty terms, such as “Bishop” that can be used when we refer to God's messenger. There are more endearing terms, such as “Pastor,” and more scriptural terms, such as “Elder;” but there is no more accurate and truly descriptive term to identify one who is called of God to preach the gospel than “the preacher.”

Solomon wrote in Eccles. 1:12, “I the preacher was king over Israel.” To him, being “the preacher” was more important than being the king. Paul wrote in Rom. 10, “How shall they hear without the preacher?” I know that men today use the term in a sarcastic fashion to make fun of people who are very devout; but when a true believer, who loves the gospel, calls the man who brought him that gospel “the preacher,” it is indeed an honor and a tribute. In my little hometown in Alabama, we

called our only physician “the doctor” and our only minister “the preacher.” Both were essential and appreciated. They were designated in this manner because they were the only ones who could do what they did. Blessed is the man who knows God and the gospel of God's grace and can be correctly called “the preacher;” for, “How shall they hear without the preacher and how shall they preach except they be sent?”

Love Never Fails

Love never fails. It will endure to the end. It never ceases in this life nor in the life to come. It is of God--the gift of God and the life of God in a man (Eccles. 3:14). Someday the gifts of prophecy, tongues, healings, and even knowledge shall vanish away; for we only know in part and prophesy in part. So much of divine mysteries and knowledge is unknown to us, but love goes on in glory. The most knowledgeable and gifted man is but a babe. But love is love and will grow, but not be superseded.

Pray For One Another

“Brethren, pray for us,” wrote Paul to the church at Thessalonica. Paul was himself a man of prayer; nevertheless, frequently he requested all believers to pray for him and for all who preach the word. We pray that doors may be opened for us to preach Christ, and we pray that the gospel may “run well” in every place. Also, let us pray for all the church family, especially those under trial and suffering. “Brethren, pray for us!”

Would You Be Justified Before God?

Then learn one thing! Jesus Christ is all in our justification before God! Only through Christ can a sinner have peace with the Holy God. Only by Christ alone can a sinner be accepted and admitted into God's presence. His righteousness is the only robe which will cover us. His blood is the only mark that will save us from eternal death. His name is the only name by which we shall obtain an entrance through the gate of eternal glory. I pity those who try to obtain God's favor by their works; and I sound a clear warning--you are building on sand; you are spending money for that which is not bread; you will hear him say, “Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” But this I know; not one person has ever entered heaven's courts

with any testimony but this; “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood--to him be the glory” (Rev. 1:5-6).

Abide in Me

Our Lord said to his disciples, “Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself” (John 15:4). It is true that a person who is saved by God's grace will remain saved forever; yet the scriptures are full of warnings to believers against unbelief, against drawing back, against neglecting the word and worship, against worldliness, and against leaving our first love! Here the Lord Jesus exhorts us to “abide” in him, which means to stay where we are. Abide (dwell) in his love, in his word, in his Spirit and fellowship. “As we have received Christ, so walk (live, abide, stay) in him.” Let us forever be on guard against any influence (whether material, social, or personal) which might hinder our fellowship and relationship with the Lord. I think of poor Esau, who satisfied his appetite but lost his blessing. Are we so foolish? Yes, we are! And we need to be constantly reminded of it. Stay where you are! Dwell in Christ and in his word, in his love and with his people. Don't let anyone nor anything come between you and him. If you notice even the slightest decline in interest, desire, or thirst for spiritual growth, go with Jacob “back to bethel” (Gen.35:1-2).

Reading the Scriptures

Desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

1 Peter 2:2

I wish that I could convince all believers of the importance of reading the scriptures, studying the scriptures, and hearing the scriptures preached. I know that our sanctification, righteousness, and redemption are complete in Christ and are perfect; yet there is a need for spiritual growth and development in love, faith, humility, knowledge, and all Christian graces! Believers are first new-born babes, then young men, and later mature fathers in Christ. This maturity and growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ is done by the Holy Spirit through the word of God. His word is infallible truth; and our spiritual growth depends not on feelings, visions, and resolutions, but on an ever-increasing love for, understanding of, and embracing of his word. As the word of God is the seed in regeneration, so

it is the source of true holiness of life and conversation. Martin Luther said:

“Feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving;
My hope is in the word of God;
Naught else is worth believing.

Though all my heart should feel condemned
For want of some sweet token,
There is one greater than my heart
Whose word cannot be broken.”

Three Things About Believers:

1. God loves them all - Jer. 31:3.
2. They all love God - 1 Cor. 16:22.
3. They all love one another - 1 John 4:7-8.

Worth Holding Fast

Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised

Hebrews 10:23

My prayer and desire for you who hear me preach and who believe the gospel of our dear Redeemer is that I may be able to teach you the truth of God and that God will reveal Christ in you and give you the grace to, “hold fast the form of sound words.” Whatever the future may hold (the death of your pastor, your removal from this place, great and perilous circumstances and trials, the loss of your companion, or the total loss of your health), I pray that every one of you stand as firm and unmoved as the mountains, abiding in Christ, his love, and his word! If our gospel be the true gospel, then it is worth your hearing; if it be worth hearing, it is worth believing; if it be worth believing, it is worth holding fast!

Best of Friends

Two brothers about 7 and 8 years old; were real buddies. The other day one caught the other wearing his shirt without asking permission to do so. When one brother asked the other why, he replied, “Because you're my best friend.” I believe what the brother is saying is that, “best friends” have all things common; and what belongs to one is always available to the other if he needs it, even without asking. Is this what Acts 4:32 declares? “Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed were his own; but they had all things common.”

Brothers in Christ

I heard a story once about two young brothers who marveled at a beautiful new car parked on the street in front of their house. The owner volunteered to take the boys for a ride. As they rode in the new car, the proud owner told the boys that HIS brother had given him this new car. One boy exclaimed, “Your brother gave you this car free for nothing?” The man said, “Yes, he did, free for nothing;” to which the little boy replied, “Boy, I wish I could be a brother like that!” Any of us would like to have a brother like that; but it takes the grace of God to be a loving, generous, and caring brother. Lord, may it please thee to make us all “best friends” and brothers in Christ.

The Incorruptible Crown

Paul wrote, “In a race all the runners compete, but only those who finish are crowned.” It is not difficult to start running in a marathon of 26 miles, 385 yards, or even to compete for a little while. The true test of endurance, perseverance, and dedication is to endure to the end. Paul added, “So run that you may obtain the incorruptible crown.”

Thankful for God's Sovereignty

Josh Gravitt pastored a church in the Midwest for fifty years. He was a close friend of Bro. A. D. Muse. Josh was frequently heard to say, “God is sovereign, and we will be thankful.” Toward the end of his life, he and Bro. Muse were in an automobile accident. Josh was hurt quite badly, and

Bro. Muse tried to comfort him while they waited for the ambulance. Josh looked up at Bro. Muse and said, “Archie, you know God is sovereign and we will be thankful.”

If Christ Be Not Risen

1 Corinthians 15:13-19

1. If Christ is not risen, there is no resurrection.
2. If Christ is not risen, our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain.
3. If Christ is not risen, we have misrepresented God and deceived our hearers.
4. If Christ is not risen, he is an imposter.
5. If Christ is not risen, you shall die in your sins; for his work depends on his resurrection.
6. If Christ is not risen, all who have died believing in him are perished forever.
7. If Christ is not risen, we are of all men most miserable.
8. If Christ is not risen, all are without help, without hope, and without God in this world. “Because God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

Let No Man Despise thy Youth

1 Timothy 4:12

Evidently Timothy was a very young man. Young men are sometimes honored by God with great gifts for usefulness in the church (as Samuel, David, Solomon, Spurgeon, McCheyne, and Brainerd). They should not be shunned because of their youth when they have gifts suitable to their office and behave well in it; but they should be honored and esteemed for their works' sake. At the same time, Paul instructs Timothy to supply by dedication, sincerity, and gravity of conduct what is wanting in age and experience! Be an example to other believers in seriousness, dedication, conduct, love, and faith. God's servants are not entertainers and comics but ambassadors of the King. Proper respect and honor are not demanded, but

it is earned and should in no way depend upon a person's age nor office, but upon his consecration and dedication to Christ and his gospel.

The Grand Design of Redemption

When we look carefully at what one writer called “The great design of our Lord in redemption,” perhaps it will help us to be a little less self-centered and more interested in the church of our Lord, the kingdom of our Lord, and the general well-being of his people everywhere.

His grand and glorious design and purpose in the everlasting covenant of mercy in Christ is:

1. To glorify himself! “That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”
2. To exalt and give all pre-eminence to Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:9-11).
3. To restore all that was ruined by the fall in the heavens and the earth. “Behold, I make all things new.”
4. To destroy every enemy and all that is contrary to his perfect holiness. “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”
5. To populate the new heaven and the new earth with a people from every nation, perfectly conformed to the image of Christ. “We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

My best interest lies in finding the direction our Redeemer is moving in my day, those to whom his message is revealed today, and walking that way with them in a fellowship of kindred minds.

Heavenly Arithmetic

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Psalm 90:12

This is heavenly arithmetic, seldom considered even by the wise! But in the light of the fact that “the days of our years” are passing away so quickly, wouldn't we be wise to so think of and measure our time that we may apply our hearts to Jesus Christ, who is true wisdom? “For whoso findeth me findeth life and shall obtain favor of the Lord God” (Prov. 8:35).

For me to Live Is Christ; And to Die Is Gain

Philippians 1:21

My Lord Jesus is the giver of life. He is the sum and substance of life. He is my hope of life eternal. My hope is to see him, to be like him, and to be with him forever. Therefore, for me “To die is gain.” I will be released from age and pain and gain a perfect body; I will be free from this sinful flesh and gain sinless perfection; I will be free from every trial, every heartache, and live in perfect rest and joy; I will enjoy perfect knowledge, immortality, and everlasting peace. “gain” is a weak word to describe such glory!

What is it, then, that makes us so fearful of death and so reluctant to part with this world? We may give a lot of reasons and feel that we are sincere and our reasons valid; but to be perfectly honest, our problem is the weakness of our faith in him and his word. Our Lord said, “O ye of little faith, wherein do you doubt?” Wherein do we doubt? His love for sinners? He gave himself for us! The efficacy of his blood? It cleanseth us from all sin! The reality of heaven? “If it were not so, I would have told you!” The awesome miracle of being changed from the image of the earthy to the image of the heavenly? Is anything too hard for God? Here is where Abraham found righteousness: “He believed God and was persuaded that what God had promised, he was able also to perform.”

Life eternal in Christ for those who believe is what he has promised; and he will perform! “Sirs, I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.” Welcome death, for with death comes life eternal.

The Savor of Life

We are determined to preach the word of truth about God's character, man's lost condition, and Christ's sufficiency and willingness to save, regardless of the results. But how blessed it is when our gospel becomes, “*The savor of life unto life!*”

And Such Were Some of You

1 Corinthians 6:11

Paul names some awful sins and then adds, “Beloved, such were some of you.” I tell you, nothing will subdue a man's pride, moderate his severity toward offenders, and cause him to be gentle and forgiving like

remembering what he was and is by nature. Ignorance of or the ignoring of our own sins and faults is the only reason why we would be unforgiving, critical, or unmerciful. I believe this is why Paul frequently reminds us of what we were and how merciful God is to us (Eph. 2:1-10), in order that we might glorify his name and show forth great grace and kindness toward others whom we regard to be wrong in some matter. It is true that, "To whom much is forgiven, he will love much." It is also true that to whom much mercy is shown, he will show mercy; and to whom much is forgiven, he will forgive much!

Christ Made Sin

Christ our Lord had no sin, knew no sin, and did no sin. He was perfect before the law of God (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15). Our sins were reckoned to him. He was identified and numbered with the transgressors; and, though he personally had no sin, yet by imputation he was the world's greatest sinner and was dealt with as such and died under the wrath of God (Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:28; Rom. 8:32). All of this was done that we might be made the righteousness of God in Christ and, by our identification and oneness with Christ, justified. Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us that we, who have no righteousness, might be made righteous before God in him (Rom. 10:1-4). With his spotless garments on, we are as holy as his Son (Isa. 45:24). Someone said, "The gospel can be summed up in two words—substitution and satisfaction." Christ, as our Substitute, made full and complete satisfaction for us before God's holy law and righteous justice. In him we are wholly sanctified, completely justified, and eternally saved.

Speak Evil of No Man

The question is asked, "By what method can we maintain peace and friendship with most people?" Now I know that there are many, many things involved here; but if it can be narrowed down to one critical point, I would say what Paul said in Titus 3:2, "Speak evil of no man." A man's name, reputation, and character are tender topics and ought to be handled most carefully; for an attack upon him in this area will bring retaliation. Men may disagree, dispute, and walk their separate ways and still live in peace. But to speak evil OF a man is to attack his name and character, and that will destroy peace. Someone said, "Let our gossip of others pass through three doors: (1) Is it true? (2) Is it kind? (3) Is it necessary?"

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1994

Vanity

Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.
Ecclesiastes 1:2

We know exactly what Solomon, the Preacher, is speaking of in this scripture. He is talking about human wisdom, pleasure, our great works and accomplishments, natural beauty, clothes, and all that is associated with this natural life. Put it all together, possess it all, and it will prove to be just so much vanity.

How wise is the person who has the grace to look upon the fashion of this world as it is (fading away) and who can put all these things where they belong (in the background) to be used and not abused and adored, as temporary blessings soon to vanish away. Clothes can be a curse; beauty, a time-consuming burden; talent can be a distraction from worship; knowledge and learning can be dreadful snares to rob the church of the simplicity of Christ and his gospel. I beseech all of us to remember the pit from which we came, the grace that made us to differ, and the fact that we are strangers and pilgrims in a world that is the enemy of God and marked for destruction. Let us be careful to set our affection on things above, not on the things (vanity) of the earth. "Naked (ugly and wrinkled) I came out of my mother's womb, and naked (ugly and wrinkled) I shall return." All that this flesh has worn, done, been, and attained will matter not at all. What will matter is if that naked flesh covers "a new heart" and "a new creature" in Christ Jesus! God grant it and the grace that accompanies such a transaction!

Religion and Eternal Life – The Difference

Religion is to know Biblical facts;

life is to know God!

Religion is to know what I believe;

life is to know whom I believe.

Religion is to be baptized into the church;

life is to be baptized into Christ.

Religion is to be reformed;

life is to be regenerated.

Religion is to be a new convert;

life is to be a new creature in Christ.

Persuaded

A man was asked, “And what is your religious persuasion?” He replied, “I am persuaded that nothing can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God Is No Respector of Persons

Acts 10:34

The fact that a man is a Jew or a Gentile, rich or poor, old or young, honored or despised, moral or wicked does not recommend him to God nor in any way gain the favor of the living God. There is nothing about us nor of us that would gain the respect or favor of God; for we are all as an “unclean thing and even our righteousnesses are filthy rags.” On the other hand, neither what we are nor have hinders us from being accepted of God if he sets his love in Christ upon us. “Accepted in the Beloved” is both the hope and the plea of any sinner, regardless of his heritage or state.

In Sanctification

In sanctification, do we wash and cleanse ourselves? No, it is grace that does it. It is “the beauty of the Lord our God; we are holy and beautiful through the righteousness he puts upon us.” Grace is laying aside our

flimsy fig leaves and putting on the holiness of Christ. Works is laying aside the righteousness of Christ and reaching for the fig leaves. Let the filthy leaves be despised and forgotten, for we are “accepted in the Beloved” in all that we need and in all that he requires!

Fully Done

Let me boldly declare what the scriptures teach and what we believe. When our Lord Jesus cried, “It is finished,” rose triumphantly from the grave, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, everything necessary for the redemption of every believer was fully done—done as God would have it; done that God may be just and justifier; done according to the scriptures; done once for all!

You may be a child like Timothy, a moral religionist like Saul, an open rebel like Zacchaeus, a business woman like Lydia, an important man like the Eunuch, a hated jailer, a runaway slave, or a dying thief; yet the promise of grace in Christ is full and free to as many as the Lord our God shall call!

Reasons for Hope

Five reasons for a sinner to hope for mercy when he calls upon the lord!

1. His nature is to show mercy! God is love. He must be merciful to some because as he is holy, he is love.
2. His desire is to show mercy! “He delights to show mercy.”
3. His glory is to show mercy! When Moses asked to see his glory, he said, “I will be merciful.”
4. His name is the mercy-giver! Jesus means “deliverer” or “He will save” (Matt. 1:21).
5. His call is to mercy! “Come, and I will give you rest.”

Why Is Water Used as A Figure of Salvation?

1. It is the gift of God; man cannot create it. For water we are absolutely dependent on God.
2. Water is indispensable; it is not a luxury but a necessity. We cannot live without it.

3. Water is the need of everyone—rich and poor, white and black, young and old.
4. Water descends from heaven. It is not a product of the earth but comes from above. So it is with salvation!

Job's Reaction

Now mine eye seeth thee...

Job 42:5

This is not a vision, nor a dream, nor an emotional spell. The Lord revealed his majesty, glory, and power to Job. Job saw the righteousness and the holiness of the Lord, and what was his reaction? He was filled with awe and reverence in the presence of the Lord. He put his hand over his mouth and bowed in silence before God. He saw his evil nature in the only light in which sin can be truly seen—the holiness of God. He confessed his sins and repented before God!

God Does Not Beg

I would say that this rule will apply to all who claim to be God's preacher, pastor, or evangelist, whether on television or in a pulpit. If he tells you what God has laid upon his heart to do, say, or build and asks you for a donation or help, the Lord God did not send him!

Our God does not beg nor depend on others to beg for him! If he lays a burden upon his servant, he will lead his people to supply the need personally and willingly. Read Psalm 50: 10-12.

As Many As

John 1:10-12

John said, "He was in the world and the world knew him not. He came unto his own and they received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the privilege to become sons of God." (John 1:10-12).

"As many as." Who are they? No names; no national distinction; no merit, morality, nor class; no age, sex, nor denomination; just "as many as" receive him and believed on his name! Who are they? I can help you to find out who they are by these scriptures. Acts 2:39, "The promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the

Lord our God shall call.” Acts 13:48, “When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” Rom. 8:14, “For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Rev. 3:19, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.”

What a privilege and blessing of God to be numbered with the “as many as!”

Grace and Truth

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

John 1:17

Moses received from God the law, which manifests what God righteously demands of all men and what men ought to be and do. The law is holy, just, and good. It demands obedience, and the only alternative is death. The law is inflexible in its claims and will remit no part of its penalty.

Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ

John 1:17

These two are inseparably joined together. We cannot have grace without truth nor the truth without grace. “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom.5:21). The grace which saves sinners is not moral weakness nor a sentimental gesture, but the grace which saves sinners is grace which is (in Christ) established on the principle of an honored law and satisfied justice! (Rom. 3:23-26.) Grace does not ignore the truth of God's law and justice, nor does grace set aside their demands. Grace establishes the law and glorifies God's justice. The law manifests what is in us—sin! Grace and truth manifest what is in God—love! The law demands righteousness from us. Grace and truth bring righteousness to us. The law sentences us to death. Grace and truth bring life to dead men. The law speaks of what we must do. Grace and truth tell what Christ has done.

A Humbling Truth

The fact that conversion and salvation are of God is a humbling truth. Grace puts its hand on the boasting mouth and shuts it once for all; and then it takes its hand off the mouth and that mouth praises Christ for his sovereign grace; and it trembles at the thought of taking any honor and glory from God.

Who?

Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom.

Job 33:24

Who is He, and where can such a one be found?

Who can love God with all his heart and his enemies as himself?

Who is holy, harmless, separate from sinners and yet numbered with them?

Who can come to earth in the flesh and yet never leave the bosom of the Father?

Who can be God to satisfy and man to suffer?

Who can be tempted in all points by the chief tempter and never sin?

Who can take the full impact of God's wrath against sin and satisfy it?

Who can die, be buried, and walk out of the tomb by his own power?

Who can ascend to heaven and, with all his people, sit down on the right hand of God forever?

Who? Only One! Our Lord Jesus Christ; he is our ransom!

Worship

We do not observe the seventh day sabbath as did Israel under the law, for Christ is our sabbath, our present and our eternal rest. But we do meet together on the Lord's day "to humble ourselves and pray and give thanks and preach the word." I counsel you not to take these times of worship lightly. There ought to be preparation of heart, mind, and body for these meetings even hours before. There should be a participation in all of the parts of worship; such as following the reading of the word in your Bible, singing the hymns with others (if one can't sing, he can follow the words in the book and speak them), engaging in prayer silently, and listening carefully and attentively to the Elder who preaches. After the benediction,

let us continue our fellowship in the things of Christ and discuss the Bible lesson and sermon. Spurgeon once said, "Let us engage our hearts in worship before sermon, during sermon, and after sermon."

He Is Able

What he has promised, he is able to perform (Rom. 4:21).

He is able to subdue all things to himself (Phil. 3:21).

He is able to keep that which we have committed to him (2 Tim. 1:12).

He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him (Heb. 7:25).

He is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory (Jude 24).

This is our assurance and our confidence, not faith in the promise but faith in the One who made the promise; for he is able.

This Sinner's Plea

1. I plead my need! As the Canaanite, Bartimaeus, the thief, and all who came to him then.
2. I plead his lovingkindness and tender mercies! He delights to show mercy and is plenteous in mercy.
3. I plead his right to show mercy to whom he will! The leper cried, "Lord, if you will, you can make me whole."
4. I plead his power over all my enemies! He has all authority in heaven and earth.
5. I plead his efficacious blood! The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin.
6. I plead his command to repent and believe! He does not merely invite sinners to repent and believe the gospel, he commands us to come.
7. I plead compliance to his command! "Lord, I do believe, help thou mine unbelief." "He that believeth on the Son, hath life." I believe; therefore, I have life.
8. I plead rest only in his person and work! "Lord, we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Yes, There Is One, Only One

If a person has concern and doubts about his hope of grace and eternal glory, he might consider the following questions.

1. God requires perfection. Am I perfect? No! Then do I have *one* who is perfect to stand for me and I in him?
2. Do I have a righteousness that can stand the test of God's holy law and presence? No! Then is there *one* who will give to me such a holiness?
3. Will God hear my weak and sinful voice before his throne? No! Then is there *one* he will hear who shall be my advocate and intercessor?
4. Do I have an acceptable blood atonement and can I act as a suitable high priest before his presence? No! Then do I have *one* who is a great High Priest in the heavens with one sacrifice for sins forever?
5. The scriptures declare, "He that bath clean hands, a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully" shall stand in his holy place. Can this be said of me? No! Then do I have *one* in whom all the fullness of holiness, power, and truth dwells who will love me, take my case as His, and bring me to God?

"Yes, there's one, only one,
The blessed, blessed Jesus, He's the one:
When afflictions press the soul,
And waves of trouble roll,
And you need a friend to help you,
He's the one!"

Defense Against Error

Jude 20-21 gives us a four-fold defense against error, indifference, and falling away.

1. "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith." This growth, strength, and help comes through God's word! Search it, study it; for in it is life.
2. "Praying in the Holy Ghost." The spiritual man can no more live without prayer and fellowship with God than a natural man can live without breathing.

3. “Keeping yourselves in the love of God.” Do not allow any root of bitterness to spring up and take us from our first love— His love for us, our love for him, and our love for one another.
4. “Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Don't ever shift your gaze from him to anyone nor anything. “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.”

The Judgment of Sin

The world judges sin by its results. God judges sin by its character and intent. Sin is the transgression of his law, whether in heart or deed, whatever the consequences or results! According to our Master, “to hate is to be guilty of murder and to lust is to be an adulterer.”

It has often been said, “Only a few believe the gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ, which you people believe and preach. Does it not concern you that the majority of people do not believe that Jesus Christ is God and that he came to redeem a people by his life and death? While you claim to have seen him by faith and heard him speak by his inspired word, the great majority of the world's population say they have not seen him nor heard him nor believe him. What is your reply?”

My reply to this particular question is: “Five men *saw* a man commit a crime. The man accused told the judge that he could produce one hundred men who *did not see* him do it. The judge found him guilty.” “For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” (Rom. 3:3).

What Is It to Be Justified?

1. To be justified is to have peace with God! (Rom. 5:1). “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”
2. To be justified is to be free from all charges! (Rom. 8:33). “Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifieth.”
3. To be justified is to have eternal life and glory! (Rom. 8:30). “And whom he justified, them he also glorified.”
4. To be justified is to be an heir of God! (Tit. 3:7). “Being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

These riches of his grace make all the more important the question raised in Job 25:4, “How then can man be justified with God?” Find the answer and one will find all that he needs in this life and in the life to come.

Two Questions to Consider

I asked these questions in the sermon last Sunday. I repeat them here for your consideration.

Does your love, care, and devotion for your children depend upon their perfect obedience to your laws and their never offending you? No! Our love for them and care of them is because of a relationship; they are our children and always will be!

Do you discipline and correct your children because you wish to hurt them? or deprive them? or punish them? No! Your purpose in discipline, restriction, and correction is to teach them, to help them mature, and to make of them what they ought to be.

Let's apply these thoughts to ourselves the next time our heavenly Father deals with us as sons and daughters in manifold trials.

Faith or Feeling

“Faith does not spring out of feeling, but feeling out of faith,” wrote H. Bonar. The less one feels, the more he should trust Christ. It is impossible to feel joy, peace, and comfort until we believe him. As all true repentance has its root in faith and all works which glorify God have their root in faith, so all true (and desired) feelings of rest and hope have their root in saving faith. It is foolish to attempt to reverse God's order of things. “Believe; all things are possible to them that believe!”

The Grace of God

The grace of God makes all men who feel its power to be brethren. We are one family in Christ. Grace makes the prosperous give his hand and help to the poor. Grace makes the healthy to reach out and care for the weak and sickly. Grace makes the learned and the intellectual to stoop from their so-called dignity and embrace the ignorant and the unlettered. Grace makes the important to be polite and considerate of the lesser. Grace makes the elder to be understanding and patient with the impulsive youth.

Grace makes the offended to forgive the offender and to forget the offense. Let the grace of God lay hold of a man's heart and pride, envy, and bitterness go to their graves.

If We Believe God

The account in Romans of how Abraham was justified and received righteousness by faith was not recorded for his sake alone nor applicable only to him, but it is by faith that every believer is justified and sanctified. Righteousness shall be imputed to us, as well as to Abraham, if we believe God, who is identified in Rom. 4:23-25 by the fact that he raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. To believe for salvation is not to believe only in the existence of God, but to believe on him in regard to his gospel! Saving faith involves the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was promised of God, sent by God, bruised by God, raised by God, and seated victoriously on the Father's right hand.

Here Is Something to Think About

For the which cause I suffer these things [or, This is why I am suffering as I do.]

2 Timothy 1:12

Why was Paul in prison? Why did all of the prophets, apostles, and reformers suffer death? Why were Bunyan, Spurgeon, and other great ministers despised? The answer is two-fold! (1) For the sake of the gospel and (2) for the sake of God's elect! If a man believes and preaches the gospel of God's true grace in Christ, he will suffer persecution because the religious world despises sovereign mercy. But if a man believes and preaches the gospel of God's glory and grace, the Lord will use even this wrath of men, persecution, and suffering to bring his elect to faith in Christ. You who compromise the truth of grace for the smiles of men, do not be deceived. These smiles are but the laughter of the demons behind these faces. And you faithful servants who incur the anger and frowns of this religious society, rejoice; for as Cowper wrote, "Behind a frowning providence, he hides a smiling face."

He causes us to triumph in Christ even when we think that we have failed. "We endure all things for the sake of God's elect that they may ALSO obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal joy" (2

Tim. 2:10). Let us be kind and considerate, but never for any reason compromise the gospel, whatever the consequences; for even the consequences are ordered by our Lord for his glory! So whether Ananias slaps you on the mouth or Lydia invites you to dinner, do not be affected overmuch; it is his doings for his glory!

Giving and Receiving

“Remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). I am thankful to our Lord for all of you who indicate by your attitude and actions that you have experienced the above. It is not money of which I speak (there's more than enough of that in these days); but you give of yourselves—loyalty, friendship, and encouragement with words and acts which money cannot buy nor produce. We are thankful for those who supply the MEANS; but who can measure the worth of those who provide the inspiration, the encouragement, and literally hold up our hands when they are drooping? Thank you!

You Can't Worship Without Christ

Horatius Boner once said, “There must be an accepted worshipper before there can be acceptable worship.” Genesis 4:4 says, “The Lord had respect unto able and to his offering.” Here we have accepted worship from an accepted worshipper, who was accepted in the Beloved, who, “by one offering perfected him.” My friend, do not even attempt worship without Christ the Lamb of God, our offering.

The Greatest Mystery

What is the greatest mystery and miracle of all time? That is easy to answer! “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” Wonder of wonders! God became the Son of Man (1 Tim. 3:16).

What is the second greatest mystery and miracle of all time? That is easy to answer also. (1 Sam. 2:8). “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.” Men become the sons of God! Oh, wonder of wonders!

Can you imagine a flame rising up in the middle of the ocean? Or a stone hanging in mid-air? Or a snow-white swan swimming out of a cesspool? Or a beautiful maiden rising up from a dusty, decayed corpse? Impossible! With men it is impossible, but with God even justifying sinners like you and me is not only possible but certain in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Works of Faith and Labor of Love

We preach the gospel of sovereign, free, covenant grace. That is the only gospel there is, and it is the only gospel which glorifies our Lord and makes certain our salvation! Even so, while our works, obedience, and love for Christ and others have nothing to do with the justification of our souls, our conduct has everything to do with the justification and proof of our faith! James did not hesitate to declare that a person who has no works has no faith. John did not hesitate to declare that a person who does not love his brother does not love God. So, preachers of grace and believers in the grace and mercy of God in Christ, I do not hesitate for one moment to urge you to “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). While a man is a fool to rest in an Arminian refuge of works, even so, he is a fool who rests on a Calvinistic refuge without works of faith and labor of love!

Communism and Christ

Years ago I read the testimony of a young man who embraced communism. Everywhere he talked of communism. I inserted the name of our Lord Jesus and found it to be a good testimony of our faith.

“There is one thing about which I am in total agreement, and that is the cause of (communism) Christ Jesus! He (it) is my life. The hold which (communism) Christ Jesus has on me grows, not lessens, as time goes by. I cannot carry on a friendship, a business, nor a conversation (very long) without relating it to (communism) Christ Jesus. I evaluate people by their attitude toward (communism) Christ; I judge books, ideas, and actions by their attitudes toward (communism) Christ; I am ready to live for (communism) Christ or ready to die for (communism) Christ!” Phil. 1:21-22.

If Any Man Thirst

The religious feast was ended. The last day had arrived. The people were packing up and preparing for the long, weary journey to their villages. They had come to the feast with great joy and expectations. Perhaps they would hear from God; perhaps Israel would again see his glory; perhaps their rulers would have a word about the Messiah! But there was nothing; and the temple courts were thronged with people ready to depart when our Lord stood and cried with a loud voice, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

1. "Thirst." This is spiritual thirst—a strong, compelling desire for forgiveness, for righteousness, for fellowship with God. "As the panting, weary deer thirsts for water brooks, so thirsts my soul, O God, for thee!"
2. "Come." "Let him come to *me!*" Not to law, to the church, to the altar, nor to the preacher, but let him come and keep coming "to *me!*" "I am the way, the truth, and the life."
3. "Drink." Drink freely, drink boldly, drink continually, drink often! Salvation and pardon are free. There is a fullness of grace in Christ, and the fountain never runs dry.

What Is A Good Hope?

God hath given us a *good hope through grace.*

2 Thessalonians 2:16

Being conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity, and brought forth from the womb speaking lies, it is the hope that I shall be born again by the Spirit of God and the word of God and given the very life of God through faith.

Being a sinner by choice and by practice, having offended God in thought, word, and deed, it is the hope that my sins shall be forgiven by the mercy of God and blotted out by the blood of Christ.

Having no righteousness nor merit of my own (for even my righteousnesses are as filthy rags in his sight), it is the hope of being clothed in the beauty of holiness and the righteousness of God accomplished by the obedience and merit of Christ.

Being frail flesh and subject to temptations both within and without, from the flesh and the devil, it is the hope that by the grace of God I will

continue in the faith of Christ, hold to my profession, and persevere to the end, being able to declare with Paul, "I have kept the faith."

Being a dying man (for I shall go the way of all who have lived before; and as it is appointed unto men once to die, I shall die), it is the hope that, in Christ, I shall have part in the first resurrection and that this mortal shall put on immortality and this corruptible, incorruption.

Having a desire to be with Christ and to be like Christ, it is the hope that I shall live eternally in his presence and be perfectly conformed to his blessed image!

“These eyes shall see him in that day,
The Lord that died for me;
And all my rising bones shall say,
Lord, who is like to Thee?

There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast.”

The Gifts of his Grace

The Lord has made us stewards of his grace and of the gifts of his grace, whether they be spiritual or material. Let us be good stewards, putting to use for his glory and the happiness of others that which he puts into our hearts and hands. Perhaps one may say, “I do not have much.” It does not matter; what little or much I have belongs to my Lord and his body; and I resolve to use it for his glory and the good of others.

No Contradiction

Paul wrote, “A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:28).

James wrote, “You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:24).

It may appear that James is contradicting Paul. Not so! Paul speaks of the justification of our souls before God. James speaks of the justification of our faith before men. Paul warns the legalists and self-righteous who sought acceptance with God by works. James warns the worldly and libertines who sought acceptance with God by an empty profession of faith which had no regard for holiness and obedience to his word. Paul warns that good works can never be a cause of mercy. James says that good works are always the effect of mercy and show the genuineness and sincerity of our faith.

Deep Trouble

You who are sailing in some deep and trouble-filled waters remember the scripture Bro. Scott Richardson read to us from Job 23:10. “But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” Job was not speaking only of himself, but of every child of God; for they all will be tried, and they all shall come forth as his gold!

Continue in Love

The Father's love to the Son is eternal, unchangeable, constant, full, and perfect. In all these respects Christ loves his people. This ought to encourage us not only to cherish that love above all things, but to continue in that state of love and favor (1 John 4:7-11). “Abide in me, abide in my word, and abide in my love;” this is true faith and discipleship.

Whatever the Trial

The ways of our Lord are sometimes mysterious to us, but we must not judge his love to us by these outward circumstances. Whatever the trial, it is for our eternal good, to prove and strengthen faith, to glorify our Lord, and to accomplish his purpose! Romans 8:28-31.

All That Is Necessary

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 13:9, “We know in part, and we prophesy in part.” That is, our knowledge of divine things is incomplete and imperfect, and our teaching is incomplete. He adds, “For now we see through a glass dimly.” Anytime we imagine that we are authorities or that we have arrived in regard to divine truth, we might remember the words of John 21:25. All that our Lord Jesus did and said is not recorded in the Bible. If all the miracles he did, sermons he preached, works he performed, and words he spoke had been written in books, the world itself could not contain the books that must be written; for he is from everlasting to everlasting. However, our Lord has been pleased to have written all that is necessary and needful for us to know concerning his person and work that we may know him, believe him, and be brought to eternal life! John 20:31.

Good Works

Do not be deceived by false prophets and wicked persons who preach that it does not matter how a person lives provided he believes the gospel, or that knowledge of theology is sufficient without obedience to the lordship of Christ in conduct. This is not true. One cannot separate faith and conduct. As Christ our Lord showed himself to be a righteous man by doing good, obeying the Father, and demonstrating love and compassion, so those who are united to him by faith, justified by his grace, and regenerated by his Spirit will seek to imitate their Lord. As a tree is known by its fruit, so a righteous man is known by his works. Good fruit does not make a good tree, but shows it to be good; so good works do not make us righteous (only Christ can do that), but show us to be so (James 2:14-20, 26).

I Am the Way, The Truth, And the Life

John 14:6

This is one of the seven great “I AM's” of John's gospel. “I am the bread of life,” “I am the light of the world,” “I am the door,” “I am the good shepherd,” “I am the resurrection and the life,” “I am the true vine,” and “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

He is saying to his disciples that he is the way to God. He does not merely show us the way by example, he is not merely a prophet to teach us the way, nor does he merely guide us in the way by strong assistance. He is himself the way! He is the way from God to men in that all heavenly blessings come through the Son. He is the way from men to God in that he is our righteousness and our sin-offering. He enables God to be both just and the justifier of sinners who believe.

He is the truth. He is not only the true God and true man, but he is truth itself! He is the sum and substance of all the truth of the gospel, of all the promises, of all the types and shadows; and he is the true way in opposition to every false way. Pilate asked, “What is truth?” Our Lord answers that question here in John 14, “I am the truth.”

He is the life. Christ speaks of life as opposed to death—all death and all kinds of death. He has life in himself. He is the source and giver of life. He is the light of life, the word of life, and he came that we might have life. “He that hath the Son of God hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12).

Love

“Above all things,” the most necessary grace is LOVE (Matt. 22:36-40; 1 Cor. 13:1-3,13). This is the bond which binds everything together in complete harmony for the glory of God and the good of one another. Knowledge, activity, zeal, and morality won't bind us to Christ nor to one another, but love will!

The Lord's Doing

My friends, when the Lord Jesus is truly seen, believed, and loved, there will be joy in the Lord with genuine peace of conscience. Yes, we are sinners; but Christ died for sinners! Yes, the law condemns; but Christ honored the law! Yes, justice has a claim; but Christ satisfied that claim!

Yes, we are imperfect in faith, in commitment, in love; but “He knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust,” and loves us all the same. We are in him by his choice, redeemed by his blood, called by his Spirit, and kept by his power, through faith which he gave us! How can I entertain any doubts based on shortcomings found in me when the whole affair is the Lord's doings?

One Offering

For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.

Hebrews 10:14

I know that some of these old Jews were blessed with an understanding of the ceremonies and sacrifices. Some of them (like Abraham and Abel) looked to “the Lamb of God.” But the bondage of the ceremonial law was such a burden! They were hedged in by a thousand commandments, requirements, and prohibitions. They were always in danger of being defiled or unclean. If they sat on a certain stool or lay on a certain bed, defiled! If they drank from a certain pitcher or touched a wall a leprous man touched, defiled! If they ate a certain food, did a certain deed, walked too many steps on a certain day, defiled! A thousand sins of ignorance were like hidden pits before them. They must be in constant fear lest they be cut off. No Jew talked of a finished work. The bullock was offered, but there must be another. The lamb was slain, but there must be another. The atonement was made, but there must be another. The high priest went into

the holiest, but he must return next year. There was no end to these things, for they could never take away sin! “Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?” (Gal. 4:21). “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12). The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin forever; and where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Works of Faith and Labor Of Love

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:6). What is this but to have honest and humble thoughts about ourselves, to be low and patiently bear every affliction, to consider the welfare and happiness of others and not to be so concerned with our own things, to work graciously for the glory of God and the good of his church, to do the more humble tasks, not looking for praise nor recognition? In due time those who do these things will be truly exalted and honored with him whom they honored by their labors of love and works of faith.

Rejoice in The Lord Jesus

1. In the greatness of his person—very God of very God
2. In the fitness of his incarnation—bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.
3. In the sufficiency of his righteousness and atonement.
4. In the comforts of his purpose and providence.
5. In the glory of his intercession and return.

The Difference

If the gospel of God's grace is but the invention of men and has no power beyond the resolve and determination of reformed flesh, how do you explain the difference in conditions where Christ Jesus is preached, believed, and loved and where his name and gospel are not loved?

1. Compare countries. I defy you to look at a map of the world and compare all things where the gospel of Christ is preached and where it is not preached. It is as different as daylight and dark.

2. Compare communities and towns where there has been a strong gospel witness and church with those places where his name is not known.
3. Compare homes where parents and children worship God, love Christ, and respect and follow his word with those homes where he is not known nor loved.
4. Compare individuals who are objects of his grace and have been translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of his dear Son and who love Christ with those who are yet in the gall of bitterness and unbelief.
5. Compare the death of a righteous man with the hopeless, blasphemous departure of a man of this world. How do you account for the difference in values, principles, conduct, attitude, and hope?

What Manner of Man Is This?

Matthew 8:27

All religious reformers and messiahs come to live; he came to die.

All others leave monuments, and memorials; no one can find his birthplace, grave, nor one possession.

All others write diaries and memoirs; he wrote on the sand.

All others choose their followers from the rich, powerful, and influential; he chose the poor and needy.

All others praise human righteousness; he condemned it.

All others seek those who can help them; he sought those whom he could help.

All others promise success and happiness to their followers; he promised tribulation and suffering.

All others hold their disciples with fear and force; he invited his to leave him if they would.

All others have palaces, mansions, and headquarters; he had no place to lay his head.

All others reward the most talented with recognition, titles, and honor; he said, "The least shall be greatest."

All others say, "Follow me; I will show you the way;" He said, "Come to me, I am the way."

All others claim to be messengers of God; he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen God!"

All others stay dead; he arose and all of his claims, works, and promises are true because God raised him from the dead.

Do Not Be Ashamed

If I truly believe the gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ Jesus, I will not hesitate to be fully identified with those who believe and preach that gospel in my day and in my area! Paul wrote from prison to Timothy and cautioned him, "Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner." It is of no use to brag on dead preachers like Spurgeon, Pink, and Barnard nor to drive miles to meetings in other towns while I refuse to encourage, support, and identify with those who preach and believe the gospel now in my area. Those who never suffer with him will never reign with him, and those who wear no scars of battle will wear no crown of victory.

Herein Is Love

1 John 4:10

John shows what true love is. For an understanding of perfect love, John sets before us the example of our Father, who gave his Son, and our Lord, who gave himself. He laid down his life for those whom

He loved! This is the mark to which he bids us advance. Our love is approved when we transfer the love of ourselves to someone else, forgetting ourselves and seeking the happiness and well-being of others. It is certain that we are far, far from being equal in love to our Lord, but the Apostle John recommends that we imitate our Lord, that we are to "love others as he loved us."

The Cross

When the Apostle declares that he will only glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, he does not refer to the actual cross of wood on which our Lord died nor to crosses which adorn church property and hang from ears and necks. He refers to all that our Lord (in his person and work) is, did, and does to redeem his elect. The cross is a word which stands for many words! It is the atonement, the honoring of the law, the satisfying of justice, the righteousness of God, the propitiation, substitution, satisfaction, salvation, eternal life, and the sure mercies of David.

The cross is death, yet in it is life.
The cross is shame, yet God's greatest glory.
The cross is loss, yet infinite gain.
The cross is foolishness, yet the wisdom of God.
The cross condemns, yet pardons in full.
The cross is justice, yet in it are mercy and love.
The cross is humiliation, yet by it he is exalted.
The cross is hell, yet the open door to heaven.
The cross is in the past, yet determines our great future.

The Lord's Table

Pastor Rowland Hill was the guest speaker for a certain church on a Sunday morning. He was seated toward the front of the auditorium, participating in the worship service, when it came time to observe the Lord's Table. The deacons were passing the tray of bread to the worshippers and came to Pastor Hill. When he reached for the bread, the deacon pulled the tray away, saying, "I'm sorry, but you cannot come to our table." (The congregation held strongly to closed communion—meaning only members of the local church are permitted to observe the ordinance.) Pastor Hill replied, "Oh, forgive me; I did not know that this was your table; I understood your pastor to say that we were observing the Lord's table."

True Faith

True faith in Christ is built upon the strongest evidence possible—the word of God! True faith is a total dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ for all our needs; such as forgiveness, sanctification, peace, and eternal life. The true believer renounces all confidence in his flesh, rejoices only in Christ Jesus, and worships God in spirit. He feeds upon Christ as the bread of life, embraces Christ as his wedding garment, derives all strength and comfort from Christ, and trusts himself to the care of Christ as his shepherd, teacher, priest, and king. This is the life of faith.

Giving Thanks unto The Father

Colossians 1:12-14

The Apostle is continually giving thanks to God for his mercies on us. Here he gives thanks that God (by his grace in Christ) has qualified us (had made us fit) to enter and partake of heaven, the bright and glorious inheritance of the saints. Every man by birth and by nature is unfit for God's presence! But in Christ, the Father has given us all we need to enter there and made us holy that we may dwell there. For he has drawn us out of that corrupt state in which we were born and translated us into the state of grace, called the kingdom of his dear Son. No way of redemption can be accepted which does not fully honor God's holiness, satisfy his holy justice, fully ransom the sinner, and give that sinner a nature meet for the very presence of God. "Absent from the body and present with the Lord" means a whole lot more than changing our residence. It involves a totally new creation and perfect conformity to God. This we have and will have in Christ our Redeemer.

Christ Is All

How much religion, tradition, and ceremony can a man know and observe and yet not know God? Well, the Jews observed thousands of Passovers yet never saw Christ, our Passover. They slew thousands of lambs and never saw Christ, the Lamb of God. They kept thousands of Sabbaths and never knew the rest of Christ, our sabbath. They ordained thousands of priests and never saw Christ, the great high priest. They actually carried the mercy-seat on their shoulders yet never came to Christ, our mercy-seat. They ate the manna and drank from that Rock but never tasted the bread and water of life—Christ Jesus. Oh, Lord, open my eyes to see him who is all and in all!

Don't Fumble the Opportunity

Real trial gives us an opportunity to minister to others, first by equipping us with necessary abilities. None can enter into a brother's sorrow like one who has actually been in the same situation. Second, by bringing us to the brother's side at this particular time. "I'm sorry that you are burdened in such a way, but I rejoice that the Lord affords me the opportunity and privilege of helping you bear your burden." My brethren, don't fumble the

opportunity to relieve the distressed, forgive the fallen, or feed the hungry. You just may not pass this way again. Read Matthew 25:41-46.

Pride

Men will put themselves in monasteries, go to the mission fields, tithe, keep holy days, count beads, afflict their bodies, go on pilgrimages, strive to keep laws, and do almost anything for pardon and salvation rather than receive eternal life as the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Why? Pride! The pride of the human heart will try anything, no matter how difficult and demeaning, rather than bow before God as a sinner and be saved by his grace. Isn't it strange that a naked beggar would rather clothe himself with filthy rags than to accept the beautiful, spotless robe of Christ by grace? Isn't it strange that a condemned criminal would rather seek to prove his innocence than to accept a full and free pardon from the hand of the King? It is not strange when one knows the awful pride of the human heart! To be saved and justified freely by the doing and dying of Another is a situation the proud human heart cannot understand nor agree to until the strength of that pride is broken by the almighty power of God.

Who Can Hear It?

In John 6:60 the scripture declares, "When many of his followers heard this, they said, this is a hard saying; who can hear it?" or "Who can be expected to listen to such teaching?"

What had they heard? They heard our Lord declare his deity (Vs. 35). They heard our Lord declare his divine sovereignty in salvation (Vs. 37-39). They heard our Lord declare man's inability to come to God or even to desire to come to God (Vs. 44-45). They heard our Lord declare that true salvation is Christ in us, received in us as one eats bread and drinks liquid; true salvation is a living union with our Lord (Vs. 53-54).

These people heard him speak, and they understood his words. His language was not unintelligible; he meant exactly what he said, and he said exactly what he meant to say. But the religious people found it to be a hard saying because what he said was irreconcilable with their own view of salvation by law and works. "Who can hear it?" Only those who by grace have been taught of God and learned of the Father (Vs. 44-45).

Accepted in The Beloved

Horatius Bonar once wrote, “Acceptance with God lies at the foundation of all true religion; for there must be an accepted worshipper before there can be acceptable worship.” Because we are accepted in the Beloved, Christ Jesus, we can then come boldly into God's presence. Because he has accepted us in Christ, he can justly accept our sacrifices of praise, prayer, and thanksgiving. False religion reverses this order and declares that we are received because of what we bring and do. NO! What we bring and do are accepted because we are accepted, fully righteous and holy in Christ. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James5:16). The man is righteous in Christ; and because of Christ, his prayer is effectual with God.

He Showed Them his Hands

On a Sunday evening the disciples were together in a certain room with the doors securely shut and locked for fear of the Jews. Our resurrected Lord stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be unto you.” When he had greeted them, he showed them the scars on his hands, made by the cruel nails, and the wound in his side, made by the soldier's spear; and Luke added, “He showed them his feet.” The primary reason for showing the disciples his wounds was to convince them that he had, indeed, risen and that the reports given by the women and the two disciples (which they did not believe) were true. But the wounds and scars of our Lord Jesus are and will remain as proof of his great love for those whom he redeemed and evidence of our full salvation in him. “They shall look upon him whom they have pierced and mourn;” but we shall look upon those same wounds, made because of our sins, and rejoice; for it is “by his stripes that we are healed” (Isa. 53:4-6).

The Grace of God Can

James wrote in James 3:7-8 that men have succeeded in taming beasts, birds, serpents, and even the fish of the sea, “but the tongue can no man tame.” No man can control it, hold it in check, nor stop its bitterness and evil. It's true—no man can tame the tongue, but the grace of God can and does! The grace of God in Christ not only tames and subdues the tongue, but makes it an instrument of praise and goodness. When the Saviour indwells the heart, he will sanctify the tongue. The grace of God quenches

the flames of pride and hate which once motivated the tongue. The grace of God implants a new nature of love which influences the tongue to speak kindly, truthfully, and sincerely for the glory of God. Only one power can change this small but powerful member from an instrument of evil to an instrument of good—the grace of God!

An Interesting Testimony

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.

Psalm 57:7

I do not know whether your experience is similar to mine; but I find myself, on the whole, more stable in spiritual things than I used to be. I remember when I used to have great heights of joy followed by great sinking of spirit and utter prostration of soul. Well, I still have both these experiences, but not often for either of them. On the whole, I find my heart calmly and quietly resting upon the promises of God, neither unduly delighted at the prospects of the joys of heaven nor too much depressed by the cares of the world, the responsibilities of my ministry, nor the sin that still troubles me, but just simply resting upon the promises of God in the Rock, Christ Jesus.

I still have fears and concerns, and I have the comforting assurance of salvation, but not like the ecstatic raptures that were characteristic of my early faith. I regard this as evidence of a growth in grace. Children are very much excited over matters which a full-grown man scarcely notices, and the spiritual child is swayed by winds which have little effect upon the mature believer!

Pride and Arrogance

In John 12:3, Mary anointed the feet of our Lord with a very costly and fragrant ointment and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was literally filled with the fragrance of the ointment. You can be sure that when a believer renders a labor of love wholly for the glory of Christ and out of love for him, the house of God will be filled with the fragrance of the deed. The fragrance followed the unselfish deed.

A man who has been introduced to what really happened in the Garden of Eden and what really happened on the cross of Calvary will have no problem with pride and arrogance. He knows where he could be and what he could be apart from the mercy and grace of God!

I hope I Can Give A Good Report

A salesman boarded an airplane and sat next to a pastor. They did not know one another; so after they were in the air, the salesman spoke, "How do you do?" The pastor replied, "Fine, thank you; and how are you?" The salesman said, "I am in the jewelry business." The pastor thought for a moment of the scripture in Mal. 3:17, "In the day when I make up my jewels, I will spare them," and replied, "Yes, and I am too." The salesman said, "I am in business with my father." The pastor answered, "And so am I." The salesman added, "We only deal in the very best jewels." The pastor said, "Our jewels are perfect." The salesman said, "My father trusts me with much of his business, and I am on my way to a meeting with my Father." The Pastor replied, "I don't know exactly when, but I have a meeting with my Father soon." The salesman sighed and settled back in the seat to take a rest with these words, "I hope I can give a good report." The pastor thoughtfully added, "I certainly hope I can, too!"

An Important Word!

When we say that we are saved by faith, we mean, accurately, through faith. It is God that saves. It is Christ's blood, Christ's sacrifice, Christ's intercession that saves. Faith is simply the channel through which there flows over into my emptiness the Divine fullness. It is not faith that saves; it is Christ that saves us, and saves us through faith.

Enter into his Rest!

Troubled soul, listen to the Holy Spirit and not to your doubts! "His Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." All of our trouble since the Garden of Eden has come from listening to the wrong voice. It is time that every believer tuned out the voices of Satan, doubt, fear, and every enemy of the grace of Christ and began to listen to him Who speaks peace to the troubled heart. "My peace I give unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Cease from your works, from your efforts to establish a righteousness, from your desire to find some good in this flesh. Enter into his rest!

Only the Spirit of God

Religion can motivate people to do many things. It can cause them to speak well of Jesus Christ, as Nicodemus; to reform the outward man, as the Pharisees, to hold high office in the church, as Judas; to get excited over an earthly kingdom, as those in Matt. 21:9; to be baptized, as Simon Magus; to give large gifts to the church, as Ananias and Sapphira; and to boast of great works, as those at the judgment in Matt. 7. But there are the essential works of grace in the heart of a sinner which only the Holy Spirit can effectually accomplish.

1. Only the Spirit of God can convince men of sin and give them broken hearts over their sin, sins, and even their righteousnesses.
2. Only the Spirit of God can cause sinners to justify God in their condemnation. Eternal condemnation would be our just reward.
3. Only the Spirit of God can lead men to look to the will of the sovereign Lord, and not to their own wills, for salvation. "Salvation is of the Lord."
4. Only the Spirit of God can wean sinners from all works, deeds, and merit and shut them up to Christ alone!
5. Only the Spirit of God can bring about peace with God and the peace of God which passes understanding, found in the hearts of his people!

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail (2 Pet. 1:10).

Self-Righteousness Keeps Us from Coming to Christ

Ever since man became a sinner, he has been self-righteous. When man had a perfect righteousness before God, he did not glory in it nor cherish it; but ever since man has fallen and lost all righteousness, he has pretended to have one! Immediately after his fall, Adam wrapped himself in his apron of leaves and began to defend himself by blaming his troubles on God who gave to him the woman, and the woman for giving him the fruit. As it was with Adam, so it is with all men; we justify ourselves before God and men. Self-righteousness is born within us; and while we can, to a degree, control lust, lies, and murder, our self-righteousness will

not allow us to confess our sins and come to God for mercy as guilty sinners. Millions of sermons have been preached against self-righteousness, but it remains the number one sin which keeps men from coming to Christ.

Martin Luther once said, "I scarcely ever preach a sermon without condemning self-righteousness, yet I find I cannot preach it down. Men still boast of who they are, what they have done, what they have *not* done, and mistake the road to heaven to be one paved by their own works and merit." God help us!

Faith Is the Gift of God

Beloved, where faith is found, it is the gift of God. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "We are saved by grace through faith and that faith is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God." Where faith is found, it is the mark of divine election. Paul called it "the faith of God's elect" (Titus 1:1).

Our Lord told the Pharisees that they did not believe because they were not of his sheep; "My sheep hear and follow." Where faith is found, spiritual life is found. We are not born again because we believe; we believe on Christ because we are born of God, just as a newborn infant sees, hears, and cries because it has life! We hear his word, see the glory of God in Christ, and call upon him for mercy because he has come to us in awakening power. Where faith is found, loving obedience is evident. This is the very theme of the book of James. True faith is not in word only but produces works of faith, labors of love, and patience of hope. Godliness, obedience, and good works are not a condition of salvation but the evidence of true salvation. Faith without works is dead! Where faith is found, it will continue to be found when this life draws to a close. When the Apostle talked of our fathers in Hebrews 11, three things are clear. They believed God! Their faith produced sincere obedience! They were still believing God when they died! "They all died in faith" (Heb.11:13).

The Righteous Also Shall Hold on his Way

Job 17:9

What this scripture is saying is that the believer shall continue to believe, rest in Christ, and die in faith. There are no exceptions. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10:27-28). The righteous

shall indeed hold his way; for the way is his way (the Lord's way), and it is his way also (the believer's way). The believer loves and prefers the way of the Lord. He walks this way willingly.

1. He may not always travel with equal speed, but he will continue therein. He may not hold his pace, but he will hold his way.

2. He may not always travel with equal enthusiasm and zeal, but he will hold his way.

3. He may not always travel with equal success, but he will hold his way; for he knows even his weakness magnifies the Lord's strength.

Christ Is Able to Save

“Able to save” means something more than just delivering men from hell. “Able to save” is the whole work of salvation from the first conviction of sin to complete glorification. Christ is not only “able to save” those who repent, but he is able to make men repent. Christ is not only “able to save” those who believe, but he is able to give a new heart and work faith in men. Christ is not only “able to save” those who continue in the faith, but he is able to keep us from falling and give us a holy desire to be like him.

Preach Christ

I would say to every preacher, elder, and teacher—preach Christ Jesus, our Lord!

When you are up or when you are down,
When you are young and when you are old,
When you first preach and when you last preach—preach Christ!
When your crowd is small or when it is large,
When men love you and when they hate you,
When you preach to the wise and when you preach to the unwise
—preach Christ!
When you are happy and when you are sad,
When you are sick or when you are well,
When you see results and when you do not see results—preach
Christ!
When you wish to comfort and when you correct,
When you preach to believers or to unbelievers,

When you are prepared and when you are not prepared—preach Christ!

The message is always the same—“We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for his sake” (2 Cor. 4:5).

Thank God for his Word

The angel said to the shepherds, “And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger” (a manger is a box or trough to hold hay for cattle to eat).

If the angel had not given these specific instructions, the shepherds would never have thought to look for the King of Israel, the Messiah, in such a lowly place. They might have looked for him in the temple of religion, or the palace of the king, or in the halls of learning, but never in a stable. And (without the words of God's servants) if the only babe born that night was found in a manger, they would not have believed him to be the Messiah!

Thank God for his word which reveals the glory of our Redeemer and his humility in becoming poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich! Don't try to seek Christ except “according to the scriptures.”

A Daily Prayer

Hold up my steps in thy path, that my footsteps slip not.

Psalm 17:5

Who? “O Lord, attend unto my cry, hear my prayer.”

What? “Hold up my steps,” my walk, and my talk; order my steps.

Where? “In thy paths,” in the paths of righteousness, godliness, and truth.

Why? “That my footsteps slip not.” If you do not hold me, keep me, and give me grace, I will fall.

Salvation Is of The Lord

Jonah 2:9

It is of the Lord in its origination - Eph. 1:3-4.

It is of the Lord in its execution - Isa. 53:10.

It is of the Lord in its application - Gal. 1:15.

It is of the Lord in its sustaining power 1 Peter 1:5.

It is of the Lord in its ultimate perfection Phil. 3:20-21.

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1995

Pride and Grace

*It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn
thy statutes.*

Psalm 119:71

Strong people are apt to be harsh and unsympathetic, so they must be taken to the furnace and melted. Healthy, independent people are apt to be proud and self-centered, so they must be made (in trouble) to realize their weakness and frailty, as Paul with his thorn. Those who have riches, possessions, and talent are often critical of the poor and weak, until they are made to see the worthlessness of all worldly charms and glory. Pride and grace are incompatible; therefore, if we are His, he will remove the pride.

Walk in Wisdom

At all times and before all people, the believer's conversation, conduct, and attitude ought to be glorifying to God and in keeping with the principles of holiness and grace! But especially should we be careful and cautious in the presence of young Christians and unbelievers lest we give offense and mislead them. "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without (non-Christians), redeeming the time (making the most of every opportunity to point them to the Redeemer).

"Let your conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:5-6). Be careful not to flaunt your liberty in the presence of one who will not understand and may be offended without saying as much. I'm sure you wish to let them know that you are human, a regular fellow, and that you are desirous to identify with them as much as possible. But "let not your good be evil spoken of" by one who is still bound by traditions, customs, and human righteousness. Curb your light-heartedness, dispense

with too much idle talk, and never give the impression that you are not much burdened for their spiritual welfare. You may reply, "But I must be myself; I must speak what I feel and enjoy my freedom in Christ." You have opportunity enough to be yourself around mature members of the body of Christ (in a way that will edify and encourage them in the walk of faith); but walk in wisdom, restraint, and in a demonstration of piety and seriousness toward men who either do not know Christ or who are just now showing an interest in the gospel. You brought your children up delicately and carefully; be as sensitive with God's babes and little children.

Able to Deliver Us

In Daniel 3:15-18, when Nebuchadnezzar asked the three Hebrew children, "And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" they replied, "Our God is able to deliver us and he will deliver us; but if he is not pleased to deliver us from the furnace, he is God alone and we will not serve other gods."

A Good Poem by The Late Edgar A. Guest

"I've seen him slip money to bums on the street
Who told him they hungered for something to eat;
And though I remarked, "They'll spend it on drink,"
He'd say, "Maybe so, but I would hate to think
That fellow was hungry, and I passed him by;
I'd rather be fooled many times by a lie,
Than to wonder if one of them I wouldn't feed,
Had told me the truth and was really in need."

I am really impressed with the principle set forth in this poem. I know that what we support is important and using some wisdom in giving the limited resources that we have is important. But what men do with what we give and the results produced by our gifts are not nearly so important as our willingness to share what God had put in our hands and giving it not to gratify our desires but for the glory of our God and out of gratitude for his goodness to us. How could we not help those in need when we have such an abundance? I would like to be remembered as a generous person who found truly that "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is not too late to begin.

The Offense of The Cross

Galatians 5:11

It addresses all as sinners, and this offends man's dignity. It comes as a sovereign revelation, and this offends man's lofty thoughts of self. Its simple faith offends man's wisdom. Its effectual atonement offends man's pride. Its total glory to God offends man's desire for praise.

No Judgment to Those in Christ

Believers expect to be judged before God upon the same holiness, truth, and justice as all other men. We expect to be weighed in the scales of justice fairly and squarely, with no respect of persons or partiality. We do not expect to be excused from examination nor judged in secrecy. As David said in Psalm 17:2, "Let the Judge of all the earth hear my case himself and set my sentence." How can one be so bold? Paul answers, "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifieth! Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ who died." There is no judgment nor condemnation to those who are in Christ.

Under Obligation

Paul declared in Gal. 5:3 that if we are going to seek any measure of righteousness or acceptance by our works or our obedience to certain laws and duties, we are not depending fully on Christ and are, therefore, under obligation to obey perfectly the complete law, both ceremonial and moral.

The True Spirit of Worship

May our Lord give us the true spirit of worship in this place today. We know that it is not where we assemble nor when we gather together, but how (in Spirit and truth) and before whom (our Lord and our God). How blessed is any place where our Redeeming Lord unveils the glory of his face and sheds his love abroad?

True worship requires preparation of heart, mind, and body. It involves participation in the singing, the reading of the scriptures, and meditation upon the mercies of God in Christ and the preached word. "Lord, tune my heart to sing thy praise."

Be Not Unequally Yoked Together with Unbelievers

2 Corinthians. 6:14

This metaphor is taken from horses and oxen which, being joined together by a common yoke, must walk and pull together in the same direction and with the same goal or have serious problems. Believers and unbelievers do not have the same principles, natures, nor goals.

They cannot walk together in harmony because they are not agreed on the vital issues of life, sin, salvation, God's glory and the gospel (Amos 3:3). Therefore, the believer is unwise who marries an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:39), who forms a business partnership with an unbeliever, who seeks social fellowship and companionship with unbelievers, who attempts to worship or conduct religious projects with unbelievers. This is not to be understood as forbidding any contact with unbelievers in civil society, conversation, or vocation and trade. If that were true, the believer would have to leave the world.

Also, God put us in the world as salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16) to witness to all men and to be an example of his grace, even to those who despise his name. But to seek an unnecessary alliance and partnership with one who does not know nor love our Master is foolish; for what fellowship, companionship, and agreement can righteousness have with unrighteousness?

Our Lord's Prayer for Us

In our Lord's great prayer of intercession, he said, "Neither pray I for these alone" (meaning, of course, his apostles and those with him then), "but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:20).

He prays for us! This is not in universal prayer for the world of men; for he said in verse 9, "I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me." The Lord is praying for every believer as if he called our names. We were in his hand and on his heart in that hour of redemption.

He prays for us before we were believers! What an awesome thought! Before his Father's presence, he calls our names and prays for our acceptance even before we walked this earth. Before I knew him, he knew me! Before I loved him, he loved me! And mystery of mysteries, before I fell in Adam, my restoration in Christ was assured!

He prays for us who will believe! Yes, there is no doubt about it; our Lord never prays nor speaks about possibilities, only certainties! "I pray for them which shall believe." Luke wrote in Acts 13:48, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." This faith in Christ is certain because it is both the gift of God to us and the work of God in us (Eph. 2:8-10).

He prays for us who shall believe in him through the word preached! Christ, our Lord, is the great and grand object of faith, but the precious promises of his word is the foundation of our faith. We believe that "He is able to perform all that he promised."

The glorious doctrines of God's free and sovereign grace are revealed throughout our Lord's prayer and are evident in all that he says, but in such a way that it is not the doctrine which is exalted, but the Redeemer! And it is not eternal love which captures our hearts, it is that he loved US eternally, chose us to be his own, and prayed for us.

A Broken Heart

Is that which is broken good for anything? One cannot see in a broken mirror; one cannot drink from a broken glass; one cannot work with a broken arm; one cannot walk with a broken leg. Only the heart is at its best state when it is broken! "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart" (Psalm 34:18).

A Just God and Saviour

It is very strange to me that religious people should think that Almighty God can accept our imperfect righteousness or pardon a sinner without his justice being fully honored.

1. Does it not occur to them that a god who can pardon without justice may one day condemn without reason?
2. A god who can set aside his righteousness may one day set aside his mercy.
3. A god who could deny his law may one day deny his gospel.
4. A god who can change his character may one day change his mind and deny his promise. But the God of glory is never unjust in order to be gracious. He saves and accepts sinners, but not until Christ has honored his law and satisfied his justice. He is a just God and a Saviour!

Trust Him!

We can trust our Lord! He who made the heavens can make us in Christ fit for heaven. He who made the earth can preserve us and supply our needs while we are on the earth. He who made the seas and all the mysteries therein can keep us in our troubles and make a way for us to pass over. Trust him!

Selah

The word *Selah* occurs seventy-two times in the book of Psalms and three times in the book of Habakkuk and has been troublesome to some translators. But it is believed by most to mean a musical pause and by others to lend emphasis to a certain statement (such as amen or forever). When reading the scriptures aloud to others, it is not necessary to read the word “Selah” unless some explanation is also offered.

Pride

Pride is a groundless thing. We have reasons for almost everything, but we have no reason to be proud. Pride should be unnatural to us, for we have nothing to be proud of. Our creation ought to humble us, for we are frail creatures who are here today and gone tomorrow. Our ignorance should be sufficient to lay us low. We spend a lifetime trying to learn a few things in part; then in old age, we can't remember where we left our glasses. Our sins should lay us in the dust, for it would be embarrassing for the most trusted friend to view our hearts. Our blessings ought to humble us; for the more we have, the more we are in debt to God who makes us to differ. A great debtor has no cause for pride. Certainly, a believer has no cause for pride, for our salvation is all of grace! Mephibosheth accurately summed up our confession, “What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?” Let us pray to be delivered from pride, for it is such a subtle enemy that only the Lord can deliver us; but we must be delivered, for “God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.”

Who, How, Where, Why, and When

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

HEBREWS 4:16

1. “Let Us”—all believers who love our Lord Jesus and rest in his redemptive grace.
2. “Come boldly”—without fear of being turned away because of our infirmities and sins; without fear of censure or condemnation.
3. “Unto the throne of grace;” because our Lord obeyed the law and died in our stead, the throne of justice and judgment is now a throne of grace and mercy.
4. “That we may obtain mercy;” this was one of Paul's favorite words, “I obtained mercy.” It was not merited nor earned, but freely bestowed.
5. “And find grace to help in time of need.” Our time of need is all the time! I came to Christ as a lost sinner, I come to Christ as a saved sinner, and one day I will be a trophy of the exceeding riches of his grace toward me in Christ Jesus.

Christ Alone

The old reformers took as their essentials, “The scriptures alone, grace alone, and Christ alone.” What did they mean, “Christ alone”? I believe it was Isaac Watts who wrote:

“Christ as our Mediator stands
Between our souls and God;
Upon both parties lays his hands,
Presenting his precious blood.

Christ is my rock; on him I build
My life, my hope, my all;
His promise shall be fulfilled;
He will not let me fall.”

All spiritual blessings that the sovereign, gracious God has for sinners are in our Lord Jesus Christ, BY the merits and blood of our Lord, and for the glory of our Redeemer. Simply put, Christ is salvation!

It is Christ, not the cross, who saves. It is Christ, not the church, who justifies. It is Christ, not my faith, nor my confession, nor my profession, who unites me to God. It is the Master, not the mother, who is our Mediator. It is his blood that cleanses, his obedience that sanctifies, his love that will not let me go, his faithfulness (not mine) constant and steadfast, and his promise, spoken to Peter but true of every believer, “I have prayed for you.”

Believers Are Trees

*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall
not wither?*

Psalm 1:3

Believers are trees planted by God (Matt. 15:13). His trees have their roots in Christ, the living water. His trees bring forth his fruit (Gal. 5:22) in HIS season--in his time and purpose. His trees never wither and never die; their life is the Spirit within.

Make me to Know

Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.

Psalm 39:4

Here is a three-fold request made by David to his Lord.

1. Make me to know mine end. David's end and goal was to, "awake with thy likeness," to "dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Help me to rest in this hope.
2. Make me to know the measure of my days! How short my days are upon the earth, and how near I am to my goal!
3. Make me to know how frail I am! A good understanding of my frailty and flesh will humble me, make me more thankful for Christ, enable me to be more patient and forgiving with others, and wean me from this world of flesh and materialism.

The Lord's Return

Some people use "the return of our Lord" to promote fear in the hearts of their hearers, or to promote zeal and works among the indifferent, or to encourage the careless to faithfulness. But the coming of the Lord Jesus is like the return home of a beloved husband, father, or son who has been away; one who is dearly loved, who has never been forgotten for a moment; whose coming is neither unexpected, dreaded nor feared; whose coming is met with joy unspeakable and full of glory. If a person cannot say with the beloved John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," how can he be included among those of whom it is said, "We wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Thes. 1:10).

Find the Answer and Learn the Gospel

Who can be in the form of God and yet take the form of a servant, the likeness of sinful flesh?

Who can come to earth in the flesh as our representative and yet never leave the bosom of the Father?

Who can be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and yet be numbered with them?

Who can be tempted in all points of the law and yet be without sin?

Who can die under the judgment of God for sin, be buried, and yet walk out of the tomb victoriously under his own power?

Who can ascend to heaven and receive commandment to sit at the right hand of majesty and yet be a man? Who? The God-man, our Lord Jesus Christ!

This is the gospel of substitution and satisfaction.

Great Is thy Faithfulness

Lamentation 3:23

We hear much preaching that exhorts us to be faithful stewards of the grace of God, faithful givers, faithful in prayer, worship, and holiness; but our hope of life and eternal glory is not in *our* faithfulness but in *his* faithfulness! We will be faithful by his grace and because he has given us a new heart which desires to walk with him. But even when we fail, fall, and stumble, he is faithful! He is faithful to his word, to his covenant, and to his Son. This was David's great comfort when he lay dying—not in his faith, his works, nor his service, but in the Lord's faithfulness to his covenant in Christ (2 Sam. 23:5).

True Faith

True faith is built upon the strongest evidence possible—the word of God! True faith is a total dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ for all our needs, such as forgiveness, sanctification, peace, and eternal life. The true believer renounces all confidence in his flesh, rejoices only in Christ Jesus, and worships God in Spirit. He feeds upon Christ as the bread of life, embraces Christ as his wedding garment, derives all strength and comfort from Christ, and trusts himself to the care of Christ as his shepherd, teacher, priest, and king. This is the life of faith.

Trust Him

Commit thy way unto the Lord.

Psalm 37:5

Cast away anxiety, worry, and fear. “Cast all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” Roll the whole burden of life and eternity upon the Lord,

like the farmer who plows the field, plants the seed, and leaves the harvest to the Lord; for what else can he do? Trust him, for he will bring it to pass!

Seek the Lord

Isaiah wrote, “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.” Bartimaeus did, the woman with the issue of blood did, the thief did. What is it to seek the lord?

1. It is to discover that by nature I do not have him, his blessings, nor his presence. I am “without God in this world.”
2. It is to desire his mercy, grace, and acceptance with him more than anything in this world.
3. It is to be made willing to be saved in Christ, by Christ on his terms, that he might be just and justifier.
4. It is to be willing to part with all that is contrary to Christ and with all who oppose my fellowship with him.
5. It is to seek him, not His! Let us seek the Lord and “hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption” (Psalm 130:7).

The Greatness of God

The greatness, importance and power of your religion depend entirely on the greatness, glory and power of your God. The depth of a man's worship depends on the power and ability of the God he believes.

Let Your Moderation Be Known unto All Men

Philippians 4:5

The word “moderation” here has no reference to eating and drinking, though this is certainly important. The word means gentleness, kindness, and consideration. “Let all people (both in the church and out of the church) see and recognize your gentleness, consideration, and kind spirit toward others.”

This is a part of the prescription for peace and contentment in Verses 4-6. (1) Rejoice in the Lord. (2) Be kind and considerate of others. (3) Remember the Lord is at hand. (4) Don't fret and worry over material

things. (5) Pray about everything with sincerity and thanksgiving; “and the peace of God which passeth understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

When I Am Weak, Then Am I Strong

1 Corinthians 12:10

What does Paul mean?

1. I am weak before the majesty of God. This is what Isaiah felt when he saw the Lord and cried, “Woe is me.”
2. I am weak before the perfect law of God. When I see God's holiness, I see that even my righteousnesses are filthy rags.
3. I am weak before trials. Like Paul, I cry for the thorn to be removed; but he replies, “My grace is sufficient for thee and my strength is made perfect in your weakness.”
4. I am weak before responsibility. Knowing the burden of the word and the power of the gospel, I cry, “Who is sufficient for these things?”
5. I am weak in spiritual watchfulness. Like the sleeping disciples, “My spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
6. I'll probably be weak in death. It will come in due time, and I must depend on dying grace.

All of this causes me, like the rabbit in Prov. 30:26, to run to the Rock, my hiding-place where I am strong.

Take Heed How Ye Hear

Luke 8:18

Let me give you some simple directions for hearing the word preached.

Hear with a hungry, needy heart! If a person goes to the drugstore seeking relief, he should have some idea of his problem. Does his head hurt or his feet? We hear the word as men with a heart problem--sin.

Hear the word of God, not just the words of men! “When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God which worketh effectually in you that believe” (1 Thess. 2:13).

Hear the word for yourself, not others! When Nathan told David the story of the stolen lamb, David was angry and said, “Who is the man, I

will deal with him.” Nathan replied, “David, thou art the man.” The word takes on a different sense when this is realized.

Hear the word in faith! What did God say of Israel? “They heard the gospel, but it did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Heb. 4:2).

The Greatest Glory

That God is able in his mercy, grace, and wisdom to make a way for our sins to be laid on a substitute and the guilty sinner to go free is the greatest glory of his nature that he has seen fit to reveal. “O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out.”

Behold, My Servant

He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

Isaiah 42:2-3

Earthly kings and rulers cry out in defense of their programs, strive with others, lift up their voices and campaign in the streets. They have no use for the weak and weary nor the frail and the faint, and their means are justified by their goals. But our Master, our Messiah, is meek and lowly in heart, a tender plant, a man of sorrows, who opened not his mouth. He does not strive nor contend to no profit. His kingdom is not of this world, so he does not boast nor try to rally support for himself in the streets. His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom; his enemies are principalities and powers, rulers of darkness who are conquered by himself alone; his people are MADE WILLING in the day of HIS POWER. He came, by his obedience and death, TO SAVE SINNERS, weak and unworthy; so he does not quench the flickering lamp but gives it oil to burn brightly. The bruised reed and the flickering lamp are his weak and frail people whom he will not cast off, but comfort, care for, and receive. The awesome courts of heaven will also receive his redeemed people, for he justifies them on the basis of truth and righteousness.

My Beloved Is Mine, and I Am His

Song of Solomon 2:16

These are the words of the church, the words of all of the redeemed.

He is mine because the Father gave him to me! “Thou gavest them me” (Jn. 17:6), and I am his because the Father gave me to him (Jn. 6:37).

He is mine and I am his by A divine union! As the vine and the branch, the head and the body, my one husband is Christ (Eph. 5:28-32).

He is mine and I am his by purchase! He bought me, redeemed me from the law and justice by his precious blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19). I own that “I am not my own, I am bought with a price.”

He is mine and I am his by A mutual affection! He loves me; that I cannot explain except to say that the cause is found in his great heart. I can explain why I love him. “He is altogether lovely,” and he has shed abroad his great love in my heart, enabling me to love him and His.

He is mine and I am his forever! The union of Christ and his church can no more be dissolved than can the trinity, “I in them and thou in me” (Jn. 17: 21-23).

Behold, The Lamb of God

John 1:29

When John pointed to our Saviour and spoke these words, he was telling us many things.

1. He is the lamb of God. All sacrifices and burnt offerings before have their fulfillment in him.
2. He is the sinless one. “A lamb without spot or blemish.”
3. He is the willing one. “He is led (not driven) as a lamb to the slaughter.”
4. He is the effectual sacrifice. The Lamb “taketh away the sin...”
In all others, there is a revelation and remembrance of sin every year.

The Promise

We often say that the word of God is the foundation of our faith. As Abraham of old, “We believe God; he is able to perform all that he promised.” Let me give you a little added assurance concerning the promise!

1. God spoke it - Gen. 15:5.
2. God wrote it - John 20:31.
3. God confirmed it with an oath - Heb. 6:13.
4. God sealed it with his blood - Acts 20:28.

If this does not encourage a person, he can't be helped.

Can These Bones Live?

Memorial Day we drove out to the cemetery to plant flowers around the graves of our loved ones. It is such a peaceful and beautiful place--green grass, trees, flowers, winding roads, shrubs, beautiful monuments, tender words. I thought that if the top could be cut from this hillside and, instead of looking at what is above, we could only look at what is six feet down, it would be a wretched sight--bones, carcasses, rottenness, worms, and corruption.

What these eyes see is not always the true picture. This is the way our Lord described the Pharisees (the religious but lost), "Ye are like whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness." But a better thought to consider when we stand over this hillside of death, decay, and human corruption is, "Can these bones live?" Yes! "In a moment! in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed into his immortal power and glory."

"These eyes shall see him in that day,
The Christ who died for me;
And all my rising bones shall say,
Lord, who is like to thee?"

We Are Sinners Seeking Mercy

There is no special way to Christ for the low or the high, the rich or the poor. They all come to Christ as guilty sinners seeking mercy. If a man's position, pride, or possessions prevent him from sitting with the publicans, the harlots, and the simple-folks at the feet of Christ, your efforts to reach him any other way are wasted breath.

Unity and Submission

The attitude of humility and the spirit of love and unity are not of our own doing; but it is God who energizes and creates in us the desire and ability to do his good pleasure. Our unity and submission are his pleasure, who said, “Do all things without murmuring, disputing, or finding fault, either with God or the brethren.”

The Two-Fold Message

The two-fold message of grace is: (1) All flesh is grass and (2) Behold your God!

This is the message that takes away all of the glory and dignity of the flesh and proclaims the redemptive glory of Christ. The results of this message will be a sense of the awesome holiness of God, the inability and sinfulness of the flesh, and the total sufficiency of the person and work of Christ.

To Worship in Spirit and Truth

We gather together or separately; we offer public prayer or private; we bring our offerings, our sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving, and commitment to God only through our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, by the Holy Spirit of God. We approach him in the spirit of sincerity and faith, believing the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. This is to worship in Spirit and in truth.

From Such Withdraw Thyself

1 Timothy 6:3-5

The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ produces a humble and loving spirit; but religion without Christ (even though quite orthodox) fills the mind with pride, vanity, and self-esteem. These people often spend their time in controversy, disputes, and strife over words, ordinances, laws, church discipline, and government. Their ministry and contact with others produce quarrels and dissension, insults and suspicion, envy and jealousy. “From such withdraw thyself.” The true grace of God holds and proclaims the gospel of his glory in the spirit of our Lord and will bring his people together in righteousness, joy, and peace.

Bless the Lord, O My Soul

Not just my lips, but my heart; not just my words, but my innermost being, my soul, bless the Lord! Let my judgment bless him by submitting to his word. Let my imagination bless him by holy meditation. Let my affections bless him by loving what he loves. Let my desires bless him by seeking his will. Let my hope bless him by restful peace and assurance. Psalm 103: 1-2; “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.”

1. This praise is personal—“Bless the Lord, O my soul.”
2. This praise is sincere—“All that is within me bless his holy name.”
3. This praise is continuous—“and forget not.”
4. This praise is thankful—“all his benefits;” my all praises his all.

Salvation Is of The Lord

Someone wrote years ago, “The royal bath, wherein black souls are washed white as snow, was filled from the veins of our Lord Jesus Christ. No blood of martyrs mingled with that stream. No blood of noble confessors and heroes of the cross entered into that river of atonement. The atonement is the unaided work of the Lord of glory.” The banquet of mercy is served by one Host, the Lord Jesus Christ, who planned the feast, prepared the meal, invited the guests, made them willing to come, and gave them their robes of spotless beauty in which to appear. A preacher called Spurgeon said, “My gospel is simply this: the whole of the work whereby a guilty, fallen son of Adam is lifted from the dunghill, washed, justified, and translated into the kingdom of God and made like his beloved Son is of the Lord from the beginning to its glorious consummation.”

Christ The Way

1 John 3:13 declares, “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.” Do not be amazed and surprised if the religious world opposes you and speaks evil of you. Your faith in Christ alone condemns their self-righteousness and works religion and exposes their false hope. I've heard people say, “If what you preach (meaning salvation is of the Lord) is true, then I am not saved.” I answer with this, “If what Abel believed and did is true and the

only way to God, then Cain came the wrong way and was rejected. This is why he despised and slew his brother.” Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

Look to His Word and Not to Your Thoughts!

Hear what he says, “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Free from the law of sin and death, free from condemnation at the bar of justice, and being free from the penalty, power, and practice of sin, you shall be someday free from its very presence. Abraham believed God that he was able to do all that he had promised. The Word incarnate and the word recorded are our assurance. “He hath said I will never leave you so I can boldly say the Lord is my helper.” God said it, and that is sufficient.

When We Come to Hear from God

Bro. Ebenezer Erskine was visiting with a pastor on his way to a preaching engagement. The pastor said, “We are meeting tonight to worship around the Lord's table. Would you preach for us?” Mr. Erskine preached, and the Lord richly blessed all. One believer urged the pastor to have Mr. Erskine come again on his return and preach for them, which he did; and the same believer, who spoke so highly of the first sermon, expressed disappointment with the second. The wise pastor asked the believer two questions. “When you heard Mr. Erskine the first time, why were you here?” He replied, “I came to worship the Lord at his table.” The second question, “Why did you come to the meeting tonight?” “I came to hear Mr. Erskine;” to which the pastor replied, “Dear one, when we come to worship God, we will hear from God; when we come to hear a man, usually this will be our experience, that we hear only a man.”

Before the Gods Will I Sing Praise to Thee

Psalm 138:1

David was surrounded by heathen people and their false worship, false religion, and pagan gods, as we are in this day. His answer to them was to

praise the living God and exalt his name. The best way to expose error is to preach the truth.

1. Do they deny his sovereignty? I will more boldly proclaim, “Our God reigneth!”
2. Do they deny covenant mercies in Christ? I will more fervently preach “the sure mercies of David!”
3. Do they despise election and effectual atonement? I shall rejoice to preach “the blood of the everlasting covenant!”
4. Do they magnify the human will and works? Our message shall be, “He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will!”

The best way to expose a false god is to preach the true and living God. If half the time men have spent in argument, debate, and councils to offset heresy had been used to preach the person and work of our sovereign Redeemer, we would be better for it.

My Lord and My God

We can have no comfortable relationship to God until we consent to be his subjects, to be ruled by him; for this is the foundation of all that is glorifying to him. “My Lord and my God,” declared Thomas. Paul wrote, “At the name of Jesus every knee shall BOW and every tongue confess that he is Lord!”

And Judas Stood with Them

When John wrote of the arresting party from the chief priests and Pharisees, who came for the Saviour in Gethsemane, the most shocking thing was the fact that “Judas stood with them” (John 18:5). How could one who had walked with Christ, heard his words, seen his power and glory, and professed to know him stand with them who despised the Redeemer? How indeed? Paul asked the same question of us in 2 Cor. 6:14, “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion hath light with darkness?”

Christ Shall Supply

I read an article which said, “People are troubled by six fears: (1) fear of poverty, (2) fear of ill health, (3) fear of criticism, (4) fear of old age, (5) fear of death, and (6) fear of condemnation.”

Thank God, in Christ we have the victory and deliverance from these fears. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7). He shall provide all our need in all of these times according to his riches in glory through Christ Jesus. What did David say? “Yea, though I walk through the valley, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me!”

His Grace Shines in Spite of Us

A proof of the power and truthfulness of the gospel is in the fact that the master’s cause has survived such weak disciples. His wisdom has not been affected by our folly, his power has not been lessened by our weakness, his holiness has not suffered through our un-holiness, and his grace shines in spite of our selfishness. Men who look to him are never disappointed.

My Lord and My God

We understand from scripture that to the apostles Christ was not a historical character, nor a creed, nor a plan of salvation; he was their Lord, real to their minds, the first love of their hearts, who was, is, and is to come—”my Lord and my God.”

An Encouraging Trip

Our trip to Belarus was most encouraging in every way. We were well received in four different churches where Bill Clark and I preached. In one church I preached about 40 minutes, and they informed me that some of them came a long way to hear the word; so we sat back down and I preached again. We had some good fellowship and response from several pastors and elders. It is true that most of them, pastors and people, know so very little of the word and scarcely anything of God’s covenant mercies, but we found some people who want to hear.

Our young missionary-publisher, Valery Grigorik (29), and his wife, Irena, are such talented people. They love the gospel of grace and are

working with Bill Clark and Evangelical Press to publish some good, solid grace books. Valery and Irena translate, set the type by computer, and see that the books are printed and distributed among preachers and people. They both are fluent' in English and Russian. So far, they have four titles in Russian; our "Gospel of John," "Old Testament Pictures," "The London Confession of 1689," and a good hymnbook. Two more books by T. Watson and H. Bonar are almost ready. "The Sovereignty of God" by Pink is also on the agenda.

We had very good meetings in Welwyn church in England; and the entire trip was an encouragement to the missionaries, pastors, people, and to us. Thank you for your prayers.

The Lord's Righteousness

Jeremiah said, "He shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!"

A fellow once said, "There are four special times when I need to be especially mindful of the fact that he is my righteousness.

1. When I have sinned in word, thought, or deed and feel the awful guilt of my nature.
2. When I have done some good work or deed and pride arises in my heart.
3. When I come before God in prayer, praise, worship, or for any reason.
4. When I look death and judgment in the face."

An Old Article Worth Repeating

A person can be saved and never be baptized, never take of the Lord's Table, and never join in a congregation of praise with other believers. We have an example in the scriptures of one who never did these things, but he was hanging on a cross. If you do not these things, make sure you are in that same condition; make sure you are hanging on a cross, for that is the only excuse you will ever have for not confessing the person and work of Christ in these sacrifices of praise.

The Fellowship of Believers

I know that most of you are faithful to the Sunday worship services, and you tarry after services to visit and talk with one another. But what about the other six days of the week? Do you have much fellowship with those whose conversation is seasoned with grace and who are a good influence on you and your children? The people of the world (religious world and social world) are not an influence for good or spiritual growth. “Evil companions and associations corrupt good character” (1 Cor. 15:33).

But our brethren comfort us, encourage us, instruct us, and regular fellowship with them and their families will be a great blessing to you and your children. Do not spend your social and family time with those who do not know God (86% of the week) and expect to correct the effect with a couple of hours on Sunday. As much time as you can devote to good fellowship in Christ with other believers will reap great blessings to you and your family.

For Those Who Preach

We may encourage one another and renew our determination to preach the gospel of God's sovereign grace by remembering that the power of God always accompanies the preaching of the gospel of his glory when done in the spirit of Christ! All true revivals and seasons of blessings have followed upon the preaching of the doctrines of grace, sovereignty, election, the effectual atonement of our Lord, and “that whole mountain range of truth upon which Jehovah sits enthroned.” God honors the preaching that honors him! Bro. Gambrill once said, “There is too much milk-sop preaching these days, trying to coax sinners to enter a truce with God, quit sinning, and join the church. The situation does not call for a truce, but for a surrender!” Let every preacher and pastor and elder bring out the heavy artillery and confront this proud generation of religionists with Isaiah's three-fold message of evangelism: (1) All flesh is grass, (2) The word of our God shall stand forever, and (3) Behold your God! (Isa. 40:6-9). It may be that our sovereign God will be pleased to “revive his work during our years.”

Our Strength Is Christ

How faint the best praise! How wandering the best prayer! How selfish the best gift! When we feel that we are nearest to God, how far off we are!

When we feel that we are most like God, how unlike God we are! What did the apostle say? “When I am weak, then I am strong.” Our strength is always Christ, never in anything we are or do.

Believers Represent the Lord

Several years ago, I applied for a home improvement loan at a local bank. I did not deal with the President of the bank nor an officer of the bank but with one of the employees. This man was quite rude and unkind to me, causing me to cancel my account at that bank and move to another. The only contact I had with the bank was with this very poor representative, but it was enough to discourage me from going there again.

You and I represent our Lord, the gospel of the Lord Jesus, and the church of the first-born. The only contact some people have with the church and the kingdom of God is through us. What kind of impression, what idea of Christianity do we convey to them? I wonder if they do not sometimes walk away offended, disappointed, and resolved not to inquire further into our faith or listen to our message. I realize that we are frail creatures, subject to all of the limitations of the flesh; but we need to set a watch on our lips, control over our tempers, and put forth a special effort to adorn the gospel of his grace. If we endure persecution for the gospel's sake, well and good, but not for our own faults!

I Have Heard...Now I See

Most believers will confess that we have seen a doctrine or truth in the scriptures, believed it to be true, believed it to be a part of divine revelation, and held a firm grip on it! Only later, in God's time, by God's grace, we have had that same truth revealed to us by God's Spirit and so experienced it in our hearts that it now has a grip on us! There is a difference, which is possibly expressed by Job in Job 42:5-6. “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore, I repent...!”

Willing in The Day of The Lord's Power

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.

Psalm 110:3

Here, the Father sets forth a sure promise to the Messiah. His people will be:

Willing to own and confess our sins.

Willing to repent of dead religious works and lay aside all personal merit.

Willing to call on God for his mercy and grace only in Christ Jesus.

Willing to be saved by the obedience and blood of Christ, that God might be just and justifier.

Willing to part with all and everyone which hinders my fellowship with him.

Willing to confess and bow to him as Lord and Christ.

“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword” (Isa. 1:19-20).

Unbelief

How great is the sin of unbelief and how stubborn is the human heart! Paul calls it an evil heart which does not believe the Lord (Heb. 3:12). Thank God he overrules our unbelief and is faithful to us when we are not faithful to him (2 Tim. 2:13).

Do Them!

Throughout the epistle to the Philippians, Paul exhorted believers to have unity of spirit and purpose, to love one another, to have real care and concern for one another, to be of a humble mind and disposition, to rest in Christ alone for righteousness and redemption, and to meditate on holy things. Then in Phil. 4:9 he wrote, “Those things which you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do.” *Do them!* It is hoped that you have not just learned a doctrine, but that you have experienced a work of true grace, that you have not received these things in your head, but in your heart! What good are our words of grace if our actions and attitudes are contrary?

A Ministry of Many

I am so thankful and grateful to the Lord for all who labor in this ministry in so many ways. This is indeed a “ministry of many.” I am only the Senior Elder, for we have other gifted elders. I am only the Senior Pastor, for we have teachers who feed the flock faithfully, visit the sick, care for the elderly, and minister to those in need. The office, tape ministry, bookstore, building and grounds, nursery and youth work--all are cared for faithfully and effectively. I semi-retired four years ago, which is only possible for a pastor if the above conditions exist (which is the New Testament way). The transition was easy here because of the “ministry of many,” especially those who so effectively grace this pulpit. May our Lord enable us to give thanks for what he has raised up in this place and give us the grace and wisdom to continue in this way of commitment to him and to his people.

To Be with Christ

The greatest joy and glory of heaven is to be with Christ and to behold his glory; but we are also to be like Christ and to be glorified with him! In all that Christ has, the believer also has a share. To be honored with him, accepted in him, and glorified with him is heaven indeed.

Love, The Necessary Grace

Above all things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Cod rule in your hearts.

Colossians 3:14-15

The most necessary grace is love. As Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 13, “The greatest of these is love.” Love is the bond which binds everything together in complete harmony for the glory of God and the good of one another. Knowledge, activity, zeal, and morality will not bind us to Christ nor to one another. Love will assure that the peace which comes through Christ and the peace which comes from the indwelling Christ will actually rule our hearts, deciding and settling matters that arise. As members of the body of Christ, we are called to live in love and peace.

Let us be thankful, first to God for all grace and then to one another. These virtues are absolutely necessary; for where love, peace, and thanksgiving are absent, faith is absent!

The Believer Is A Mystery

The believer is a mystery to others and to himself also. He is sanctified yet feels himself to be the chief of sinners. He loves God's law, yet he wrestles with an inward desire to have his own way. He has great sorrow and heaviness of heart over others, yet he rejoices in the Lord always. His spirit longs to be with Christ, yet his flesh clings to the earth. He knows that he is secure in Christ, yet he examines his faith continually.

Religion or Worship

Based upon the word of God, human nature, and from personal experience, I conclude that many people who attend church services are merely religious. The Lord said to a group of religious folk, "Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written this people draweth nigh unto me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Isa. 29:13). I believe most people are religious for gain, duty, habit, social contacts and a number of other reasons. But true believers attend church services because they are in love with and desire to worship and become better acquainted with a person--the Lord Jesus Christ! The true believer (one who knows, worships, loves, trusts, and follows Jesus Christ) comes to the house of God with a real desire to worship (praise and thank) his God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is a person who draws him/her to the worship services, and that is just what he does—Worship! The religious need to be entertained during the service and impressed by spiritual surroundings; but believers need only to hear God's word preached, pray, and sing his praises. In fact, the simpler the service and the more preaching (of Christ), the better the believer likes it; for it is Christ he has come to hear about and worship.

Meet Sinners Where They Are

In certain respects, all men are the same. They are all fallen sons of Adam, they all need Christ as Lord and Saviour, and they all must repent and receive Christ. At the same time, all human beings are different and we would greatly err if we dealt with them in the same way. Nicodemus is different from the woman at the well; Christ shut him up to regeneration but issued to her a loving invitation. The rich ruler is different from Zacchaeus; Christ shut the ruler up to self-denial but informed Zacchaeus that he would dine with him. Christ in his infinite wisdom met men where

they were. Oh, for some of that wisdom to deal with sinners where they are and to be able to point them to Christ!

No Fear of God

Those of us who know the living God, who have seen a little of his glory and majesty in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, are troubled by the low opinion that men today have of God. “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3:18). It is unbelievable the trash and triviality permitted in the pulpit and the church in the name of God. This irreverence; familiarity, and loose talk about the Lord God is unheard of in the scriptures or among our fathers in the faith.

No one ever accused King Nebuchadnezzar of being a prophet; but the Lord taught this man, as he taught Jonah, the truth of his power and glory in a most unusual way. And when the experience was over, Nebuchadnezzar said, “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Daniel 4:34-35).

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1996

Woe Is Me

Then said I, woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Isaiah 6:5

What was Isaiah's response to this awesome revelation of God's presence and holiness?

He saw himself! A man may look at others and say, "I thank thee, Lord, I am not like other men." A man may look at the written law and say, "I am blameless." But if a man is exposed to the absolute holiness and righteousness of God, he must cry, "Woe is me! I am cut off."

He saw the evil of his heart—the source of his problems. But he cried, "I am a man of unclean lips." That's true, but "out of the heart, the mouth speaketh." Unclean lips are the outlet and result of an unclean heart.

He saw the ruin of all the sons of Adam—religious and otherwise! The fall of Adam is universal and complete. There are none good, none righteous, none that understand, and none that seek God!

In Isaiah 40 he reveals the three-fold message of the gospel—(1) "All flesh is grass," (2) "The word of our God shall stand forever," and (3) "Behold your God will come and his record is with him."

Come to Christ For Mercy

The sinner who comes to Christ does not come to have his earthly problems solved nor to have his body and bank account healed. He comes to Christ to be saved from sin; he comes to Christ for mercy! Mercy is the sinner's sole request.

I Question Today's Religion

Anyone who is serious about a knowledge of and relationship with the living God ought to question today's religion which makes salvation only a profession and not an experience; which operates only in a person's mind and not upon his heart; which obligates God but does not glorify God; which designates Jesus Christ as Saviour and denies his lordship; whose hope of eternal life is based mainly upon what men think and not upon what God says.

True Faith

When the Lord is pleased to bring a person to Christ in faith, he takes away his despair but not his sorrow over sin. True faith gives a person pardon but does not make him presumptuous. True faith gives a person rest and assurance in Christ but does not allow him to be indifferent and leave off being watchful and dedicated to spiritual growth. True faith gives a person strength, knowledge, and a good hope; but it never promotes pride nor allows him to boast. True faith brings a person to live for God but at the same time makes him more attentive to his earthly relationships and duties. He becomes a more loving, caring, generous husband, wife, parent, brother, sister, and neighbor.

When Paul said to the Roman church, "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8), it is certain he referred to their labor of love and works of faith; for true faith can only be revealed to others by the fruit of faith. One cannot see our hearts, but they can see and hear what comes from our hearts and hands.

A Humbling Truth

The fact that conversion and salvation are of God is a humbling truth. Grace puts its hand on the boasting mouth and shuts it once for all; and then it takes its hand off the mouth, and that mouth will praise Christ for his sovereign grace; it trembles at the thought of taking any honor or glory from God.

A Believer Is A Mystery

The believer is a mystery to others and to himself also. He is sanctified yet feels himself to be the chief of sinners. He loves God's law and will, yet he wrestles with an inward desire to have his own way. He has great sorrow and heaviness of heart for many reasons, yet he rejoices in the Lord always. His spirit longs to depart and be with Christ, yet his flesh clings to this earth. He knows that he is secure in Christ, yet he examines his faith continually.

A Great Temptation to Many

It has for centuries been a great temptation to many talented men to spend their time studying, arguing and quarreling over sovereignty and responsibility, Sabbath days and church government, prophetic speculation and future events, when they would have been better employed and more greatly used of God in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. It certainly does not harm us to sharpen our minds, to look into the mysteries of God, to inquire into that which is written, revealed and unrevealed; but our powers are limited, our gifts are limited, and our time is limited.

Let us sound a clear, positive note concerning that which God has made known without doubt, "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." A man can be saved and not know whether he is pre, post, or a-mil; but a man cannot be saved who does not know Christ. A man can be saved without a love for T.U.L.I.P., but he cannot be saved without a love for Christ. A man can be saved who refuses the lordship of elders, but a man cannot be saved who refuses the Lordship of Christ. A man can be saved who does not enter the rest of your Sabbath, but a man cannot be saved who has not ceased from his labors and entered the rest of Christ.

Absolutely Necessary

Wherefore in all things it behoved him (was essential) to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 2:17

Can you give three reasons why it was absolutely essential and necessary for our Lord to become a man; bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh?

1. Unless he was a man, he could not be a high priest to offer sacrifice for sin and make intercession; for the high priest was taken from among men (Heb. 5:1).
2. Unless he was a man, he would have no sacrifice to offer. He had to shed his blood, for without shedding of blood is no remission (Heb. 9:22-25).
3. Unless he was a man, he could not be a Mediator nor Advocate with a perfect righteousness to plead (1 John 2:1).

Growing in Grace

As God's people grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ, our prayers change! There is more praise and less petition; more gratitude and less "give me;" more thanksgiving and fewer requests. I believe this is a sign of spiritual maturity. Psalm 103 is an example of this. Most agree that David wrote the psalm in his later years; for there is a clear sense of the frailty of this life, there is a keener awareness of sin, and there is a high priority placed on mercy and forgiveness! As far as I can tell, not one petition nor request occurs throughout the entire psalm. The psalmist, David, kneels in adoration and praises the Lord himself. Let us learn from this. It is possible to be taken up with blessings, gifts, and benefits and fail to praise, thank, and rejoice in the Lord himself!

Trees of Righteousness

They are called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

Isaiah 61:3

Trees are planted by someone. These trees of righteousness are “the planting of the Lord.” Christ said, “Every plant which my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13).

Trees which live have their roots in water. These trees of righteousness have their roots in Christ, “the living water.” “I will give you living water,” our Lord said (John 4:10).

Trees which God plants bear fruit. “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit” (John 15:5). That fruit is the fruit of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, humility, and temperance.

Trees of righteousness never wither and die. How could he be glorified if his vineyard died or brought forth no fruit? No! “He bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psalm 1:3).

A Mediator

*If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him:
but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?*

1 Samuel 2:25

If one can be found to serve as our Mediator, our great High Priest and deliverer, he must be equal with God and yet take the form of a servant and be made of a woman in the likeness of our sinful flesh. He must be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, yet be numbered with them. He must be tempted in all points of the law yet be without sin. He must die under the judgment of our sins, be buried, and walk out of the tomb victoriously under his own power. He must ascend to heaven (with us in his fold), be accepted, and commanded of the Father to sit at the right hand of majesty, and yet be a man.

“Yes, there's One, only One,
The blessed, blessed Jesus, He's the One.
When afflictions press the soul,

And waves of trouble roll,
And you need a friend to help you—
He's the one!”

Only One Gospel That Saves

There is but one gospel for all purposes and for all people; the very gospel that comforts the saint is the gospel which saves the sinner. Some have the idea that we get men saved by whatever means then we teach them “the doctrines of grace.” Not so! It is grace that saves, grace that motivates, and grace that comforts.

Good News

There is not one sin in the book of God against any believer. Our sins were laid on him, the law is honored, the justice of God is satisfied; and inasmuch as sin condemned him, sin cannot condemn us. This is my hope, my comfort, and my security; that all my sins, transgressions, and iniquities were atoned for before they were even committed! This, indeed, is good news for the guilty.

Believers Will Continue

*When he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected;
for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it
carefully with tears.*

Hebrews 12:17

The birthright was a spiritual position; God's man in the family. It carried divine favor, spiritual blessing, and fellowship with God. Esau counted it with contempt in order to satisfy his fleshly appetite and desire. Shall we be so foolish as to consider that anything the world has to offer is worth the fellowship of our Lord? Those who are so foolish as to allow anything in this life to cause them to deny the faith or to renounce their responsibilities to God and his people or to allow this flesh to draw them away from his fellowship will, like Esau, someday weep with bitter tears, when it is beyond their power to recover what is lost! We are warned to guard against fleshly appetite, apostasy, covetousness, and the neglect of spiritual privileges. We have entered a race; the prize goes to those who

finish (Heb. 10:35-39). There will be hard times, heavy trials, and along the way there will be tempting pastures of pleasure which appeal to the lust of the eye, the pride of life, and the love of fame and fortune. But we must turn away and go on. We may proceed slowly or rapidly; we may stumble and fall; but looking to Christ, we will continue in him. Neither the frowns of the world nor its smiles will cause us to surrender our inheritance.

Faithfulness and Grace Bring Glory to Christ

In a recent message I read Titus 2:10 which exhorts us to “Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” When we think of the word “adorn,” usually we think of adding to the beauty of something. For example: “Ribbons adorned her hair.” Now we can add nothing to the perfect glory and beauty of the doctrine of Christ; but to adorn the doctrine of Christ and the gospel we believe and love is to grace that gospel with its own beauty, to show forth the works of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope which only the gospel of Christ can produce in a person.

Paul said in 1 Cor.15:10, “But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of god which was in me.” The faithfulness and grace Paul manifested brought glory to Christ, whose they were!

Beloved, Now Are We the Sons of God

1 John 3:2

Because of his sovereign, eternal love, we are now (at this present time) sons of God. The people of the world know you as an earthly son, brother, or sister; but they do not know you as a son of God because they do not know God. They did not know his only begotten Son when he came to this world, and they rejected his claims as they will deny yours! But though this world does not recognize us as sons of God; though our present condition is far short of his glory; though our bodies are but flesh and death is before us; though we are subject to many miseries, temptations, and trials; though we are aware of the sin within us; now, at this very moment, we are sons of God! From what we are, it does not appear what

we shall be; but when he returns, we shall see him as he is (not. as he was on this earth in the likeness of sinful flesh); and we shall be like him! Then the world will know what we now know, that we are the sons of God. “I in them, and thou in me that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me” (John 17:23).

Even to Them Which Stumble at The Word

1 Peter 2:8

The real offense is in the gospel of his grace! It was not his works but his words that caused the division among the Jews. His works did anger them, and they tried to discredit them; for his works bore a strong witness to his deity. But the thing they hated and resented most was his claim to deity, to being the Christ, to being the Redeemer of whom Moses wrote and for whom Abraham looked. They said, “For good works we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou being a man, makest thyself God” (John 10:33). Men today have no quarrel with religion, good works, nor noble efforts in the name of God; it is the gospel of sovereign mercy through a suffering and sufficient Substitute which causes them to stumble and become offended. Who he is, what he suffered, why he suffered, and where he is now, if clearly preached, will cause the sheep to rejoice and the rest to stumble. “Unto you he is precious...unto them he is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense” (1 Peter 2:7-8).

Christ Is the King

Our Lord Jesus Christ is not like today's kings, with royal titles and no authority! He is King of kings and Lord of lords, on his Holy Hill of Zion, vested with all authority over all flesh. When he brings us under the sway of his scepter, he bestows all blessings of his kingdom.

Christ Is Faithful

Jeremiah wrote, “Great is thy faithfulness.” We preach and exhort our hearers to be faithful stewards of the grace of God, faithful givers to help others, faithful in worship, prayer, and holiness. And we will be faithful by his grace and because he has given us a new heart which desires to walk with him. But even when we fail, fall, and make a mess of things, he is

faithful: and our hope of life and glory is not in our faithfulness but in his faithfulness. God is faithful to his Son, to his covenant, and to his Word. And this was David's comfort when he lay dying—not in his works, service, nor even his faith, but in God's faithfulness to his covenant (2 Samuel 23:5).

Behold Your God!

Isaiah 40:9

The voice said, “Cry.” And I said, “What shall I cry? What shall I preach? What is the message men need to hear?” The voice said, “Get up in a high mountain, lift up your voice, be not afraid, and say unto the people, behold your God!” John Gill said it best: “Behold your God! That divine person is come that was promised, prophesied, and expected, even Emmanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh, God your Saviour; and who, being God, truly God, is able to save to the uttermost.”

Look to him with an eye of faith and be saved. Behold your God! Behold the Son of God, the Lamb of God, who has borne our sins and taken them away. Behold him now, as your King and your God, on the throne, made and declared Christ and Lord, crowned with glory and honor, on the same throne with his heavenly Father, having all power in heaven and earth. And let the echo of your faith be, “My Lord and my God!”

Reckon It to Be So

Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Romans 6:11

Because of our redemption in Christ and our relationship to our Lord, there are two things we should reckon to be absolutely true! Consider and count them to be true.

We are dead indeed to sin! Our sins are cleansed, put away and paid for. The curse and condemnation of the law for all sin (past, present, and future) is removed. We are not under its penalty, its power, nor its dominion; and one day we will no longer feel its presence.

We are alive unto God through our Lord Jesus. As regenerated persons, we live unto God (in Adam we died; in Christ we live forever and shall never die). As justified persons we do not fear condemnation nor the

second death. As sanctified persons we have a perfect holiness by the obedience of Christ and are fit for the very presence of God. As children of God we love Christ, his word, his people, and his commandments, endeavoring in word and deed to glorify our Lord. Reckon it to be so!

Our Portion and Inheritance

One who is born of God has the Lord as his portion and inheritance. He is thankful for who he is and what he has; for in Christ he has “all things” that are worth having. Having food and clothing and believing friends, he is content. He brought nothing into this world and will carry nothing out. Earthly possessions, honors, and property have no value after death; but to be forgiven of sin and alive in Christ is the highest prize and glory. As soon as a person really learns, believes, and embraces the grace of Christ, like Moses, “he esteems even the reproach of Christ greater than the riches of this world.” But they that seek after riches and worldly honor fall into many temptations, which drown men in destruction and misery. This craving for the world's wealth and approval has caused many to depart from the faith and pierce themselves through with many sorrows (1 Tim. 6:6-10).

Love Is Not Rude and Unmannerly

Pride, conceit and self-righteousness beget rudeness, but love produces humility and courtesy. “Love seeketh not its own way,” rights, and will (Phil. 2:3-8). “Love is not easily provoked.” Love is not touchy, resentful, easily offended. “Love thinketh no evil.” It does not carry about a suspicious nature looking for faults, but rather it thinks the best of others.

Come Completely to Christ

I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.

2 Timothy 1:12

True faith is based upon a knowledge of Christ, “I know whom I have believed,” a confidence in Christ, “I am persuaded he is able to keep,” and involves a committal to Christ, “that which I have committed unto him against that day.” Those who savingly come to the Lord Jesus do so

willingly, lovingly, confidently, and completely. It is unworthy of his great name and person to talk of a partial surrender, a token allegiance, or a part-time profession and discipleship. I believe Paul is saying, "I have committed my soul to him to save, my sins to him to forgive, my life to him to order and arrange, my possessions to him to share, my body to him to raise and make like his glorious body."

Love

"Love suffers long;" that is, it makes a man patient and long-suffering with the faults of others. He is not easily offended and given to wrath. "Love is kind," tender and compassionate. Love wishes to bestow the best that it can on the object of its affection (Eph. 4:32). "Love envieth not;" or does not boil over with jealousy but is made happy by the prosperity and happiness of others. Nothing is more adverse to love than envy. "Love vaunteth not itself;" it is never proud, conceited, nor arrogant. What do we have to be conceited about? "Who maketh thee to differ?" (1 Cor. 4:7). "Love is not puffed up!" (Rom. 12:3,10).

Look unto Christ

Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God.

Isaiah 45:22

I suppose when we tell men to "look to Christ" or read, "looking unto Jesus," this puzzles some people. One may say, "If Christ were in Jerusalem, I would sell out and go and look upon and listen to him." Another may say, "If Christ were on earth today, I would look to him and sit at his feet." My friends, we talk like Nicodemus, "How can I be born again; shall I enter my mother's womb and be born again?" We are so bound to the flesh. Our saving relationship and connection with the Lord Jesus has nothing to do with our natural eyes, ears, and flesh, but with the mind and heart.

To look to Christ is to hear him in the mind, believe and love him in the heart, bow and receive him in the will! One does not need a college degree to look. You may not be able to read, but you can look; you may be destitute of virtue, but you can look; you may have no merit, but you can look. Looking to the Redeemer requires my personal interest and attention. Another can pray for me, but no one can look for me; I must look to Christ

myself; not to his apostles, his church, his law, his ordinances. “Look unto me,” He said, “and be ye saved.”

The Lord Is Everything

The Lord is everything to his people; their light in darkness, their strength in weakness, their salvation from sin, their helper in trouble, their security in danger and doubt, their confidence and hope of life eternal. “O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee” (Psalm 84:11).

One Sunday

On his way to church one Sunday, Rowland Hill saw a farmer plowing his field. He said to the man, “Friend, why don't you rest your animals and yourself and go to the house of God with us and worship the Lord?” The man replied, “Mr. Hill, I plow my fields on Sunday, sow my seed on Sunday, and reap the crops on Sunday; and I have a better yield than any of you in October.” The wise minister replied, “My dear man, you should bear in mind that the Lord does not always settle his accounts in October!”

Seeing the Son

He that seeth the Son and believes on him hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up again at the last day.

John 6:30

Seeing the Son in the covenant of mercy, incarnate, on the cross, risen and exalted at the right hand of God, and believing him is the whole of saving faith. Paul said in Heb.12:2, it is “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” You may read a dozen books on faith, hear a hundred sermons on faith, and memorize all of the definitions of faith, and it will all come down to this one thing, “He that seeth the Son and believes on him, hath everlasting life!” Look to Christ, not to your faith; look to Christ, not to your works, either good or bad; look to Christ, not to your feelings and experiences; look to Christ, not to your brethren, either the best of them or the worst of them. Look to Christ now, look to Christ anew, look to Christ alone, and look to Christ always.

Christ Is All Our Salvation

God's love for us in Christ; God's choice of us in Christ; God's righteousness fulfilled for us in Christ; God's acceptance of us in Christ is all our salvation; not our works, feelings, nor our righteousnesses. "My God, when I approach thy throne and all thy glory see, this is my stay and this alone, that Jesus died for me."

Pray for Submission

I need constantly to remind myself that "all things are of God." Let me not preach sovereignty and then complain of my lot in life. Let me not talk of divine purpose and then spend my days murmuring about my trials and troubles. It is totally inconsistent with faith in the sovereign Christ for me to question his good providence. Paul called covetousness "idolatry" and said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11). Let us pray for submission to his will, for with it comes peace.

True or Not True

Is it true that God became a man, lived on earth a perfect, holy, and sinless life, died on a cross, was buried and rose from the dead? Is it true that this God-man ascended to heaven and is exalted by the Father to his right hand as our Advocate? *If it is true*, then we have a righteousness, a Redeemer, a Mediator, and a hope of eternal glory. *If it is not true*, if there is no such man in glory called Jesus Christ, then no other man or woman will ever be in glory and we live alone, die alone, and stand alone before the awful throne of judgment. What a horrible thought!

Suffering with Christ

If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Romans 8:17-18

Christ and his people are *one*; therefore, when he suffered for sin and died, we were in him and we partook of the efficacy and blessing of his sacrifice.

Also, because of this oneness with him, there will be sufferings for us to bear, for his sake and for the gospel's sake.

Also, being still in this flesh and subject to all of the infirmities, afflictions, and diseases of this natural body, and eventually to physical death, we shall have to suffer trials on this earth. But when we look at our suffering and trials in the light of eternal glory, there is no comparison.

My Future State

There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.

2 Timothy 4:8

The happiness of our future state is called “a crown of righteousness.” (1) Because of the glory of it. “The glory which thou has given me, I have given them.” (2) Because we are kings and priests. “He has made us kings and priests.” (3) Because we reign with him, the King of righteousness. (4) Because we are seated together in heavenly places in Christ.

He That Gloriet, Let Him Glory in The Lord

2 Corinthians 10:17

None of us really has anything in which to glory, neither the one who preaches nor the ones who provide so that the preacher can travel and preach, nor the ones who pray, nor the ones who sing, work, and serve. It is God who convicts of sin, reveals the Son, and calls the sinner. It is God who saves, keeps, and sanctifies. We have no reason to glory in ourselves nor in our works, but only to praise and give glory to our God, who is pleased to use these human vessels to accomplish his divine purpose. Besides, it is not the man who praises and commends himself who is approved and accepted; but it is the person whom the Lord enables, approves, and uses. Self-praise means nothing! Actually, rather than lifting a person, self-praise really lowers us in the estimation of true believers and is nauseous to God!

Speak

Be not afraid, but speak...for I have much people in this city.

Acts 18:9-10

Because of opposition and persecution Paul would have left Corinth; but the Lord commanded him to stay and preach the gospel, “For I have much people in this city.” This is our encouragement and motivation for preaching the gospel here and everywhere we have the opportunity, because our Lord has chosen to save some of Adam's fallen race. And the gospel of our Lord Jesus, preached by “earthen vessels,” is the means God is pleased to use to bring his people to know and love the Saviour.

We call on his name because we believe he is the only Lord and Saviour. We believe he is our Redeemer because we heard of him from God's preacher. And God's preacher preached the gospel to us because God sent him to preach that gospel to us (Rom.10:13-15). If you begin this story from the other end, it would be: God chose them; God sent the gospel to them, quickened them and gave them ears to hear; God made them willing to believe and they called on him for mercy and were saved.

Salvation is of the Lord from its origination to its ultimate perfection. “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.” He began the work and he will perfect it. Yet, every son is a willing, loving, obedient son who would be nowhere else (but the Father's house) for ten million worlds! We are his by choice—His and ours!

Rejoice, Pray, Give Thanks!

Rejoice evermore! Pray without ceasing! In everything give thanks! This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

We always have cause to rejoice in our blessed Redeemer; that we live in an attitude of prayer and communion with our Lord; and because he orders our steps and all things are working together for our good, that we give thanks unto him for everything! “Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks.” The difficulty involved in fulfilling this command of our Lord has no bearing on the authority of it nor the responsibility to obey it. Our Lord said to his disciples in John 13: 17, “If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.” So, we hear him

say, “Rejoice, pray, give thanks” and we know these things, our happiness will be found in doing them!

Paul's Assurance

In Rom. 8:33 Paul asked, “Who can or will lay anything to the charge of God's elect?” Will God? No! It is God who justified us. Will God bring us before him in judgment? No! It is God who acquits us. Then in Verse 34 he asked, “Who is there to condemn us?” will Christ? To whom the Father hath committed all judgment (John5:22). Will Christ? By whom the Father will judge the world. Will Christ condemn us? NO! It is Christ, the Messiah, “Who died for us, and who was raised from the dead, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” He will not condemn us! Then who shall charge, condemn, or separate us from his love? No one! If God be for us, who can be against us? Christ, beloved, is our confidence, our hope and assurance. He that believeth on him shall never be put to shame!

Antichrist

Every spirit that confesseth NOT that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is the spirit of antichrist.

1 John 4:3

To confess that our Lord is come in the flesh is to preach and confess that he was before he came, very God of very God! It is to confess that God actually put on human flesh! He became a real man, “made of a woman under the law,” the second Adam, born to redeem a people. It is to confess that He, who came in the flesh to redeem a people, by his doing and dying, did actually, effectually, and eternally redeem those for whom he died! To deny his effectual work of righteousness and atonement is to deny his person, purpose, and power; and this is the spirit of antichrist.

The spirit of antichrist is not anti-religion; it promotes religion. It is not anti-morality nor anti-law; it promotes both! It is not anti-good works; it encourages good works done in the name of morality and religion. It is antichrist! It is opposed to giving Christ all the glory for our election, our redemption, our calling, our righteousness, our preservation and perseverance, our resurrection, and our eternal glory. The Spirit of God says, “Jesus paid it all.” The spirit of antichrist says:

“Jesus did a part
And *I* a part, you know;
Sin left a crimson stain,
But *we* washed it white as snow.”

By the Word and Will of God

God created man out of the dust, and back to the dust he goes at the word of his creator. By his word we live, and by his word we die. Believers do not die because of age, disease, or a decree of fate, but by the will and word of our Heavenly Father. An old writer once said, “Even an angel cannot save me from the grave, nor could a thousand angels put me there.” Our times are in his hand! One of our friends was asked if she had any preference concerning when and how she would die. She replied, “No, indeed, those matters are in the hands of my Father.” “But what if he would refer it to you?” “Then, I suppose that I would refer it back to him again.” Just teach us, Lord, to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Effects of Belief in Election

When we truly realize that the Lord of heaven and earth **CHOSE US** in Christ to salvation, redeemed us by his blood, and called us by his gospel, it will have a seven-fold effect on us.

1. It will cause us to rejoice! “O blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causeth to approach unto thee.” Praise him from whom all blessings flow.
2. It will promote humility! “Who maketh thee to differ?” Grace and pride are incompatible, impossible to exist together. We rejoice in Christ and have no confidence in this flesh.
3. It will comfort us in hard trials! “The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.” Even these work together for our good and his glory. When we trust him, we don't have to understand.
4. It will suppress self and sin! “We are not our own;” we are bought with so great a price. Therefore, we desire to glorify our Lord in our souls and in our bodies.
5. It gives us assurance! If God foreknew us, predestinated us to be like Christ, justified us, called us by his Spirit, if Christ redeemed us, intercedes for us and is for us, who can be against us?

6. It makes dying easier! The eternal covenant of grace in Christ was David's pillow of rest and peace when he lay dying (2 Sam. 23:1-5). He sought no other source of comfort and hope than the sovereign love of God in Christ.
7. It will assure us that our preaching is never in vain! "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa.55:11). This cannot be applied to all preaching, only to the preaching of his word!

Filthy Rags

Isaiah bemoaned the fact that "even our righteousnesses are filthy rags." George Whitefield said, "A man hasn't truly repented until he can repent even of his best deeds, which are all imperfect." Bishop Beveridge wrote: "Because of the evil root in our hearts, there is evil fruit in our nature. The root poisons even our so-called righteousness. We cannot pray without sin; we do not hear nor preach a sermon without sin; we do not give alms without sin; we cannot even confess our sins but that our very confession is an aggravation of sin. Our repentance needs to be repented of, and our tears need to be washed in his blood. Not only the worst behavior, but often the best duties of our lives prove us to be sons of Adam." Oh, the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

The Preacher's Lot

The preacher often says, "Mine is a very hard task, for I preach to many in whom I see nothing hopeful. I thunder for the law, and the conscience is not stirred; I talk of the love and mercy of God, and the heart is not moved; I preach the sufferings of Christ for our sins, and the eye does not weep; I point to hell, and there is no fear nor is there any desire kindled when I speak of the glory of heaven. There is absolutely nothing in men that encourages me to continue to preach to them. Is there any reason why I should preach the word to those in whom I see nothing?"

Brother, come back with me to the world's creation. Of what did God make the world? Did he not make it out of nothing? You have never yet grasped the idea of nothing until you consider the creation. When God spoke, there was no ear to hear. When he said, "Let there be light," there was no eye to see it. When he made the rose, there was no nose to smell it.

When he made the apple, there was no mouth to taste it; and when he made the garden, there was no foot to walk in it. Nothing was everywhere, and yet out of nothing he made all things. He spoke and it was done. He commanded and it appeared. You say there is nothing in the sinner to whom you preach? That's wonderful, for there is in that state of nothing room for the great God to create something, to create a new heart and a right spirit. The conditions are right for God to do so inasmuch as the heart of man is empty and has room for grace where there was no grace.

If you had to convert the sinner, then I would agree that your task is hopeless; but if salvation is of the Lord, you may comfort your heart with this thought, that he who created all this marvelous earth out of nothing can also create life, love, faith, and hope where there are no spiritual ingredients nor interest with which to work.

Don't Be Like Demas

I believe I know a little of the grief that Paul felt when he wrote, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." I don't know very much about Demas, but I do know that Paul believed that Demas loved Christ, loved the gospel, and would continue in the faith of Christ until God called him home. But Demas allowed someone or something to come between him and the Lord, revealing that what he had professed for so long was only a profession!

Perhaps Demas had a common, ordinary job and was promoted to a position of authority, which made his association with the despised gospel and apostles embarrassing to him; or perhaps Demas was a widower who met a certain unbelieving, attractive woman, and she turned his foolish head from the church and the gospel; or perhaps Demas came into a great inheritance and his new life-style did not fit the humble life-style of the apostles; or perhaps Demas was a young, handsome man who despised the single life and was determined to marry his choice over the protest of the Apostle Paul; or perhaps Demas was an ambitious preacher who felt that toning down the offensive message of free-grace and seeking the approval of Arminians and the fellowship of religionists would open doors for him, increase his congregation, and add to his support; or perhaps Demas had just never stopped loving Demas and his claims to Christ were only a part of his effort to promote himself.

Husbands and Wives

I understand why natural men and women dislike one another, why their so-called love turns to hate, and why they divorce one another and subject their children to such turmoil and trial. These people do not know God and have not the love of God for others in their hearts. But this is not the way of Christ! This is a denial of what we preach and believe! When two believers cannot live together in love and peace, cannot fulfill their vows which they made to one another before God, cannot sacrifice pride and self for the good of their children and the testimony of the gospel, they are telling the world that God's grace is not sufficient! That the blood of Christ cannot overcome the world and flesh! That he that is in us is not greater than he that is in the world!

Husbands, love your wives and your children. Give yourself to their well-being, spiritually and physically. Keep yourselves and your family in the love of God, no matter how difficult the way may become. Wives, love, respect, and obey your husbands. Make a clean, comfortable, and pleasant home for him, your children, and guests. Be a good cook, prepare food for your household, serve special meals on special days, be a homemaker and companion and helpmate. Paul said, "Teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:4-5).

Sanctifying God

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

1 Peter 3:15

God is essentially and infinitely holy. We do not make him so; but we do declare, proclaim, and regard him to be our Holy and Sovereign Lord in two, ways.

1. Internally - "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." Unless we truly love, praise, and worship God in our hearts, all of our outward form and claims are hypocrisy.
2. Externally - he is sanctified by his people when we walk in the Spirit, obey his word, preach his gospel, and live together in peace.

“Be ready to give an answer.” When a person asks us to tell him why we believe our sins are pardoned, why we are not under condemnation, and why we expect to dwell in the house of the Lord forever, be ready to give him a scriptural answer. It is because

“Christ loved us and gave himself for us.” It is because Christ took upon himself our nature, and by his perfect obedience gave us righteousness and holiness before God, and because Christ took ours in sin his body on the tree and satisfied infinite justice on our behalf, enabling God to be just when he justifies this sinner. Christ is our life, our hope, our righteousness, and our redemption.

Give this answer in a humble, meek, and thankful fashion; for we are what we are by his grace. Give this answer in the fear of the Lord, being careful to give him all the glory; and give it courteously and respectfully; it maybe that the person is a true seeker!

Preach the Word

I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word!

2 Timothy 4:1

Paul charges Timothy and every preacher, pastor, and elder before God, who chose us, and before the Lord Jesus, who saved us and whose gospel we preach, to be diligent and faithful to preach his word! All wisdom, truth, and understanding are contained in the scriptures; and we draw our doctrine and instructions from no other source. We shall give an account of our ministry before our Lord when he comes. Therefore, it does not matter what men may think of our message nor how they respond; it is our Lord to whom we are accountable and whom we seek to honor and to please.

The reason for this solemn charge is (Verse 3) because the time will come (and has come) when people will not receive the word of God. Self-righteous by nature, proud and boastful in spirit, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, they will turn their backs on the Bible, treat it with ridicule and contempt, and listen to preachers and teachers who preach what they want to hear, not what the scriptures declare.

But the more that error, false teaching, and human wisdom prevail, the more earnestly God's servants must labor to preach the word of truth. The more that compromise and will-worship surround us, the more

diligently we must watch, keeping calm and faithful, fully performing the duties of a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus—preaching his word. “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for Christ's sake” (2 Cor. 4:5). We covet no man's praise, silver nor gold; and we seek not our own, but the things of Christ. Our course is set, our orders are clear, and our one objective (as his ambassadors) is to preach the word.

Sin Is Difficult to Put Away

I love this scripture; Isaiah 1:18-20. Mr. Spurgeon preached from it and said, “God proposes a conference, not to determine IF we are sinners, nor the extent of our sins, but what is to be done about our sins.” We are all sinners, and our sins are deep and double dyed “as scarlet” and “red like crimson.” Sin is so difficult to put away that it is impossible for all but God! And even God cannot put away sin except through the precious blood and obedience of the Son of his love!

Hebrews 9:26 declares that “He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

What saith the word? “Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.”

1. Are we willing to own and confess our sins?
2. Are we willing to repent of dead works and self-righteousness?
3. Are we willing to call on God in Christ for his mercy and grace?
4. Are we willing to confess him and bow to him as Lord?

Then we shall be saved! “But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Well, my friend, his word is sure; his blood is sufficient; his promises are sweet; but if we refuse and rebel, his judgments are swift and certain.

A Form of Godliness

*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;
from such turn away.*

2 Timothy 3:5

Our Lord said, “You do err not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God.” This is the great problem with “another gospel and another Jesus” which is preached today. It is a form of godliness but denies the power of God.

1. A form of godliness says, “God wills to save all men;” denying his power adds, “but he cannot save unless men open their hearts to him.”
2. A form of godliness says, “God has a wonderful place for men and women;” denying his power adds, “but you must allow him to have his will and way.”
3. A form of godliness says, “Christ died on the cross for all the sins of all the sons of Adam that all may be saved;” denying the power of his blood adds, “but his blood has no power nor efficacy to save anyone until men release it to work.”
4. A form of godliness says, “The Holy Spirit knocks at everyone's heart with a desire to enter and work repentance and faith;” denying the power adds, “but you must open the door.”
5. A form of godliness says, “Salvation is of the Lord;” denying the power adds, “but those whom he saves may yet fall away and perish.”

We Are Complete in Him

In our Lord Jesus Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and we are complete in him! The more quickly this matter is settled and we know indeed that Christ is all we need to make us righteous and accepted before God, the Father, the sooner we will enjoy the rest, peace, and assurance promised to his own. Listen well, now!! Most of God's elect are brought to Christ earlier in life than the thief on the cross; but all are redeemed and made righteous exactly as he was; by the sovereign, free grace of God in Christ Jesus, plus nothing, minus nothing. Note this poem by John Newton:

“Strange and mysterious is my life;
What opposites I feel within!
A stable peace, a constant strife,
The rule of grace, the power of sin.
Too often I am captive led,
Yet daily triumph in my Head.”

For Love Is of God...

1 John 4:7

Love is not only the command of God, according to the will of God, well-pleasing in the sight of God, but love is of God. It is the gift of God to us, the work of his Spirit in us, and the evidence of our relationship with him. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. It should not be difficult for one who is the object of such love to manifest it to others, for one who has been forgiven so freely to forgive, and for one who has received such mercy to show mercy!

Be Strong in The Grace That Is in Christ

2 Timothy 2:1

Be strong inwardly and outwardly in the grace of our Lord. Be rooted and grounded in his gospel, have a full persuasion of the truth of it and your interest in him! Preach it boldly and defend it bravely. But also be strong in his providence and dealings in grace with you and yours. Don't profess sovereign grace and then complain about sovereign providence. Pity parties make poor platforms for the preaching of sovereign grace. God's servants are here to “comfort,” not to be comforted and coddled.

Blessed Are the Dead, Who Die in the Lord

Revelation 14:13

This is the message from heaven. It was a voice from heaven which commanded John to write, “Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord.” The world will take you into slavish country club where wealth, power, and success abound. These people are laughing, singing, drinking, and making merry. Nothing on this earth is beyond their reach. The best is none too good. The world will take you to a university where the scholars

of the world delve deeper into the wisdom of the world; or to the Olympic games where men and women in excellent health vie for prestigious, precious medals; or to the field of battle where officers win a place in history; or to the halls of legislature; for the doctrine of men is “blessed are the living who are rich, wise, healthy, and powerful.”

The voice from heaven takes you into a darkened room. There is complete silence except for the breathing of a weary pilgrim. A loving husband and grateful children stand at the foot of the bed as tears flow silently down their cheeks. In a moment, with a deep sigh, her eyes open and a smile crosses her face as she says, “I am ready to go and be with Christ which is far better; for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him for this very day.” She breathes for the last time and she is gone; and the voice from heaven says, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord that they may rest from their labors.”

The world may try, but they cannot write blessed where God has written cursed; and try as they might, they cannot write cursed where God has written blessed! It is so sad that what the world calls rich, God calls poor; and what the world calls poor, God calls rich in faith and heirs of his kingdom (James 2:5).

Bethlehem

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Micah 5:2

In Bethlehem, Rachel gave birth to Benjamin and died. Before she died, she called the name of her infant son, Benoni, “The son of sorrow.” But his father, Jacob, called him Benjamin, “The son of the right hand.” Christ was truly “the man of sorrows” and the Son of the Father's right hand” (Gen.35:18).

In Bethlehem, Ruth met Boaz, her kinsman-redeemer, who redeemed her from poverty! Our Kinsman-Redeemer came to earth at Bethlehem to redeem us.

In Bethlehem, David was born, chosen of God to be king over Israel. Our King of kings and Lord of lords is born in Bethlehem. “Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, Christ the Lord.”

Bethlehem means “House of Bread.” What a fitting name for the birthplace of “The Bread of Life.” “He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).

Bethlehem is “little among the thousands of Judah.” Our Lord always comes to the “little ones,” not to Hebron's high hills nor to Jerusalem's royal palaces, but to the little villages to be the Saviour of the poor and needy.

The Death of a Believer

Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season. Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.

Job 5:26-27

The death of the believer is *inevitable*. “Thou shalt come to thy grave.” Because of sin, death has passed upon all. All men must die and be buried, believers and unbelievers.

The death of the believer is *acceptable*. “Thou shall come to thy grave.” This reveals a willingness to die. We choose to be absent from this body and present with the Lord. Our Lord said to the unbelievers, “This night thy soul shall be required of thee” (demanded of thee). Not so the elect! We are not forced to leave this earth and be with Christ; we willingly come to him in death as we came to him in faith.

The death of the believer is *timely*. “Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age;” that is, in the fullness of the Lord's time! Our time on this earth is determined by our Lord. “Our bounds are set, the number of our days are with thee.” No believer dies before or beyond the Lord's appointed age, which is, regardless of the length of it, our full age.

The death of the believer is with *victory* and fullness of redemption. “Like a shock of corn cometh in in his season.” If corn is harvested before it is ripe, it would not be fit for use; and if it is left in the field too long, it will come to nothing. Our salvation is complete in Christ. “He hath made us sufficient and ripe for glory.” So, when the Lord's purpose for us (on this earth and in his church) is served, the believer is ripe and ready to be plucked from this field and taken to his table for the marriage feast.

The death of the believer is for his *good*. Eliphaz says, “I have searched and studied these things and they are true; I exhort you to hear it and know it” (take it to heart as belonging to you) and know that all that

our Lord brings to pass is for our good, who love him and are called according to his purpose.

Assurance

To those who struggle with assurance, saying, “There are so many times that I do not feel saved,” I would remind you that, before you came to Christ, there were many times you did not feel lost! Did your lack of “lost feelings” at that time mean that you weren't lost? Of course not! For feelings have nothing to do with whether or not we are lost. Do you not see that it is the same with respect to whether or not we are saved?

Martin Luther said it well when he wrote:

“For feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the word of God;
Naught else is worth believing.

Though all my heart should feel condemned
For want of some sweet token,
There is one greater than my heart,
Whose word cannot be broken.”

There it is! God's Word!

A Believer Is All Ear

A missionary to a remote tribe was attempting to translate the scriptures into their language, and he had difficulty finding a word for “obedience” a virtue that few of the natives practiced. One day, as he went home from the village, his dog stayed behind. The missionary called his dog to come and follow him. The dog came running at top speed. An old native by the roadside said in the native tongue, “Your dog is all ear.” The missionary got hold of that expression at once and so had a beautiful word for “obedience.” A believer is “all ear” to the words of his Lord!

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1997

A Difference

There is a difference in learning Calvin's theology and learning the theology of Calvin!! Just as there is a difference in knowing the doctrines of grace and knowing the grace of the doctrines.

The Importance of Gospel Preaching

The things that are written and that are preached by us concerning salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ are not only written and preached to encourage sinners to believe him and come to him that they might be saved, but the gospel is written and preached to you who believe that you may have confidence and assurance of your interest in Christ, and having come to him, you are still coming. How is faith confirmed? How is faith increased? Even by the preaching of the gospel, by having the person and work, the righteousness and sacrifice of our Lord explained to us again. Eternal life is to be found nowhere but in Christ. And in order that those who are already in Christ through faith might have assurance and grow in grace and the knowledge of him, the preacher is to magnify over and over again the gospel of the glory of our blessed Lord!

Worship

Fellowship among believers, greetings and conversation with friends, meeting our relatives and friends in church are all important to us; but we gather in this place on Sunday to worship God. Never let anything interfere with that. Also, preparation of heart for worship is more important than appearance and friendliness with our neighbors about us.

A Just God and Saviour

When God forgives, he must compromise no law nor interfere with the highest and strictest justice! Human pardons may and should compromise, but Divine pardon—never! That is why Christ must die if he is to secure our pardon before the Father, for our God is a just God and a Saviour!

His Lordship

We can have no comfortable relation to God until we consent to be his subjects, to be ruled by him; for this is the foundation of all that is glorifying to him. “My Lord and my God,” declares Thomas. Paul wrote, “At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord.”

Able to Save

“Able to save” means something more than just delivering men from hell. “Able to save” is the whole work of salvation from the first conviction of sin, to complete glorification. Christ is not only “able to save” those who repent, but he is able to make men repent. Christ is not only “able to save” those who believe, but he is able to give a new heart and work faith in men. Christ is not only “able to save” those who continue in the faith, but he is able to keep us from falling and give us a holy desire to be like him.

Thoughts on Worship

Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

Hebrews 10:25

It is the duty of all believers to meet together for worship, praise, study, and fellowship.

1. Because of God, who has appointed worship, who approves of it, who is glorified in it, and who should be worshipped.
2. Because of ourselves. We need to “draw nigh to God,” to “seek his face,” to praise, pray, and be refreshed and comforted with other believers.
3. Because of others—our families, friends, and neighbors who may, by our example and encouragement, be brought to seek the Lord.

But worship is not only a duty and commandment, worship is a blessed privilege. David wrote, “Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts.” We are blessed to have the desire to worship God and hear his word. We are blessed to have the freedom to go to the place of worship. We are blessed to have a family of believers with whom to meet and worship. We are blessed to have elders and preachers called of God to preach to us and teach us the word. We are blessed to have the physical strength to go to the house of the Lord and worship.

“Blessed (indeed) is the man whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto thee.”

The Sin unto Death

1 John 5:16

The sin unto death (which is deserving of death and will certainly bring eternal death) is denying the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is *that sin* which kept most of Israel from the promised land—unbelief (Heb. 3:19). The sin unto death is not a temporary fall, the transgression of a commandment, nor to be overtaken in a fault. The sin unto death is apostasy—to deny the precious person and work of our Lord Jesus. “He that hath not the Son, hath not life” but only death. We pray and receive forgiveness for all sin, “The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin” but the man who refuses Christ and denies the merits of his blood and righteousness is condemned already. We are advised to not pray for such sin lest we be found contending with God's justice and trying to be more merciful than He! Verse 18 of this same chapter encourages us with the promise that a true believer (born of God) will not deny Christ, but is kept and “the wicked one touches him not.”

Behold! What Manner of Love!

1 John 3:1

“Behold!” Take notice, with wonder and astonishment, what matchless, amazing and wonderful love the Father has given freely and graciously to us, “That we should be called sons of God.” This is the privilege and blessing that exceeds all others. Because our Lord loved us and gave himself for us, children of wrath are now children of love, rebels and traitors are now sons, enemies are now sons of God and joint heirs with

Christ. How can we comprehend such love and grace? This is our song of rejoicing now and ever shall be. "Therefore the world knows us not, because the world knew him not." The reason the people of this world do not recognize and acknowledge us as the children of God is because they do not know God. "He was in the world and the world knew him not."

Though the world does not recognize us as sons of God, though our present condition is very short of God's glory, though our bodies are flesh and old age and death are before us, though we are subject to many miseries, temptations, and trials, though we are aware of the sin and evil which still dwell within us, "now," at this very moment, "We are the sons of God." It would be foolish to estimate what we shall be by what we are now. "But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Justification and Sanctification Are in Christ

The believer who is regenerated and in Christ, who has been brought under Divine influences which enable him to love and delight in God's law and commandments, still feels his inability and imperfections. The struggle within him is like a civil war. He did not look to the law for justification, nor can he now look to the law for sanctification. He must look to Christ for both! We know from past experience that the law cannot make a sinner righteous, and we know from present experience that the law cannot make a saved man holy. Both justification and sanctification are in Christ.

Those Who Come to Christ

I believe that all who come to our Redeemer in saving faith do so personally. I wish that I could believe God for my family; but unless a man in his own heart believes on Christ, he will perish. Those who come to Christ will come sincerely. A man is not only persuaded that Christ is the way, but in his heart he lovingly and sincerely agrees with God's terms of salvation. "My son, give me thine heart" (Prov. 23:26). It is the heart or nothing in this heavenly marriage.

Also, those who come to Christ do so rationally, in knowledge and understanding. They know what he saved them from; sin's curse and condemnation. They know who saved them our Lord Jesus Christ, the

God-man. They know HOW he saved them; by his perfect obedience and precious blood. They know why he saved them; “according to the good pleasure of his own will” (grace, grace, and more grace). And those who come to Christ come permanently, with no intention of ever leaving him; and, by his grace, with no possibility of ever being forsaken by him.

A Thorn in The Flesh

God took care of any tendency in Paul to be proud or puffed up over the greatness of his gifts, talents, and revelations by giving him a thorn in the flesh. Pride is natural in every man's heart, and believers are not without it; therefore, to prevent this sin, which he hates, the Lord gave Paul a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass and trouble him. We know that the Lord permitted this affliction; we know that it had to do with Paul's flesh. Whether it was weakness, sickness, temptation, his appearance, we do not know; but it was “a messenger of Satan;” or as God was pleased to allow Satan to afflict Job, he was pleased to allow Paul to be sorely tried and troubled by this angel of hell.

The plain and evident purpose for this thorn in the flesh was to prevent Paul from becoming proud, puffed up, and exalted above measure. So we can conclude that instead of being a hindrance (as most would suppose), this thorn proved to be a help to the Apostle, as our infirmities, afflictions, and trials are for our good. And, like Paul, we will grumble about them, pray to have them removed, and not fully understand their value now. But someday I am confident we shall understand and know as we have been known.

Justified Freely by his Grace

Rowland Hill was preaching at a county fair. He noticed the vendors selling their wares and said to his audience, “Our friends bring their fruits and crafts to the fair to sell, and they work hard to get up to their price. I bring you better things than they; my milk and bread is eternal food, but my difficulty is in getting you down to my price! My goods are free! 'Come,' saith the Lord, 'He that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price.’”

“My friends,” Hill continued, “If I were to offer justification for five dollars, all would leave this place justified; if I were to preach justification for all who would walk a hundred miles, all would become pilgrims tomorrow; if I were to preach justification for all who would be beaten

with stripes, all would bare their backs immediately; but when the gift of life—justification freely by his grace in Christ Jesus; is offered freely for the poor and needy, men turn away in unbelief.”

“The moment a sinner believes
And trusts our crucified Lord,
Full pardon at once he receives;
Salvation is ours through his blood!”

The Same Measure

Give and it shall be given unto you...For with the same measure that you mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Luke 6:38

Our Lord is saying that he uses the same measure for his gifts to us as we use to give to others. The more generous a farmer is with some seed, the greater the harvest; and the more generous, loving, and giving we are enabled to be, the greater our real blessings and these blessings of God are not dollars and cents! People who weigh God's blessing in the scales of materialism are untaught in the word.

A Fourfold Summary of Romans Seven

1. The law (that system which makes obedience the condition of life and makes righteousness depend on perfect obedience) can never deliver a person from the curse and dominion of sin. If a man is to be justified, he must be delivered from the law as a covenant or method of obtaining life and be brought into Christ, who is our righteousness.
2. The law can tell a person what is right and what is wrong. It can command a man to avoid wrong and do right. It can threaten, condemn, and curse him if he does not comply; but it cannot eradicate his sinful inclinations (rather, it irritates and stimulates them). So, instead of becoming better and happier under the law, we become more depraved and more wretched as knowledge of the law increases.

3. The law in the hands of the Holy Spirit does not stop sin; it reveals sin. It does not give life; it kills. It does not make men holy; it exposes their un-holiness.
4. Even now that I am regenerated and in Christ, now that I am brought under influences which make me love and delight in God's law, I still feel my inability and my imperfections. The struggle is like a civil war within me. I did not look to the law for justification, nor can I look to the law for sanctification! I look to Christ for both. Paul proved from his past experience that the law cannot make a saved man holy. Both justification and sanctification are in Christ.

Oh, unhappy, pitiful, and wretched man that I am! Who will release and deliver me from the shackles of this body of death? Oh, thank God, he will, through Jesus Christ the Anointed One!

Our Great High Priest

Seeing that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.

Hebrews 4:14-16

Our Lord is called the great high priest because of the deity of his person; he is the Son of God! He is the great high priest because of the place in which he officiates, heaven! He is the great high priest because of the efficacy of his sacrifice, "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." He is the great high priest because of the continuation of his priesthood, "He is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."

Seeing then that he is who he is and where he is, and he is our great high priest interceding for every believer, let us hold fast our trust, hope, and confidence in him and come boldly (without fear of being turned away) unto God's throne of grace, where we shall obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Peter's Curiosity

Our Lord revealed to Peter the way he would glorify God in death; and Peter looked at John and asked, "Lord, what will John do? In what way will John suffer?" It is really difficult to determine the reason Peter asked this of Christ. Was he genuinely concerned for his friend, John? Was he

just curious about John's future service and usefulness? Or was he thinking, "If I am to be a prisoner and die for the faith, should not John and the others suffer also? Am I the only one who will bear the wrath of men for the glory of God?" From the answer that our Lord gave to Peter, we can determine that the question was impertinent, improper, and totally out of place. Evidently our Lord's command, "You follow me," had not registered fully with Peter.

The Lord's reply carries a strong rebuke for Peter's curiosity, friendly interest, probing into secret matters, or whatever it was that motivated the question. "If it is my will for John to live and not die until I return, of what concern is that to you? You will follow me!" While the body of Christ is made up of many members and our one goal and purpose is to glorify our Head, Jesus Christ (to preach his word, to feed his sheep, and to follow him), yet the work each member does, the gifts each member has, the place each occupies, and the suffering each endures are according to the will and purpose of the Lord. We must be occupied with our own ministry, calling, and faithfulness to Christ and not be taken up with how, when, or where he is pleased to use others (1 Cor.12:12-21). There should be no jealousy, envy, nor self-seeking among the servants of the great King. In his infinite wisdom and according to his purpose, he calls and assigns each servant to his place and work, which work is to be done willingly, diligently, and unto the Lord (2 Tim. 2:9-10).

The Good Part

Mary sat at the feet of the Lord and heard his Word. Her sister, Martha, had many things to do which she believed to be important. She must provide bodily comforts and necessities; and when she complained to the Lord that her sister should leave the place where his word was heard and give more attention to fleshly pursuits, our Lord said, "Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things: one thing is needful: Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:39-42).

Wise indeed are the persons, who, like Mary, chose to sit, live, and raise their children where they can hear his word. This is the one thing needful and the one thing that shall not be taken away when all these worldly comforts, treasures, and honors are perished and forgotten. I weep for those who have made the wrong choice and warn those today who may follow their example. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. Today, where two or three gather in his name, he is there and they hear his word.

This is the good part of this earthly journey. I have nothing materially to leave my children, but they were raised hearing his word preached. Which is the good part?

All That Is Necessary

We must never imagine that all that our Lord did and said is recorded in the Bible or in any other book. If all the miracles he did, words he spoke, and works he performed had been written in books, the apostle said, “The world could not contain the books that must be written.” However, our Lord has been pleased to have written all that is necessary and needful for us to know concerning his person and work, that we may know him, believe him, and be brought to eternal life. Christ and the scriptures must go together! As Christ reveals the Father, so the Bible reveals Christ; they cannot be separated. Christ is the truth; Christ is the gospel. It is only because Christ lives that the word lives and is effectual to give life.

“Should all the forms that men devise
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'll call them vanity and lies
And bind the scriptures to my heart.”

Easy Believism

I question today's easy believism which makes salvation only a profession and not an experience; which operates only in a man's mind and not upon his heart; which obligates God but does not glorify God; which designates Jesus Christ as Saviour and denies his Lordship! Rolfe Barnard used to say, “Don't talk to me so much about your Saviour; tell me who is your Lord? Somebody is your lord! Whoever your lord is, his servant you are!” What do we say to our generation? “Accept Jesus as your Saviour?” It's hard to find anyone who has not already done that. Or, “Cease from self and bow to the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ”? It's hard to find anyone who has done *that!* Christ will be Lord of all or not Lord at all!

Only the Gospel Can Make Us Free

It was the grace of God which taught Saul of Tarsus how to say “brother.” If the Lord had not brought this proud Pharisee down, his Jewish pride

would never have condescended to call a Roman, “brother.” But by the grace of God, there is in the heart of this, “Hebrew of Hebrews” such love for all believers of every race and nation that he calls them all, “my brethren.”

Someone said, “Grace joins believers in a common brotherhood and makes the prominent man embrace the poor and confess his love for them; grace weaves the threads of separate individualities and personalities into one undivided family!” Let the gospel be learned in the heart and it will mark the end of selfishness, it will bring down the proud from their elevated positions, and it will lift the young, the weak, and the old to their common rights and position as sons of God also. “Liberty, equality, and fraternity” may be heralded in the Bill of Rights; but only the gospel can make us truly free, make us all equal in the person of our Lord Jesus, and give us the fraternity of brethren in God's family.

Light

Ye are the light of the world...Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

Our Lord tells us that we are lights which he uses for his glory in this world. What purpose does a light serve?

1. A light enables people to see things as they really are. Phillip asked the Eunuch, “Do you understand what you read?” He replied, “How can I except some man should guide me.” God enables us to preach, teach, and witness to others that they may, “See Christ and believe on him.”
2. A light can comfort. On a dark and stormy night, have you ever said to your little one, “I will leave the hall light on so that you won't be afraid”? A little encouragement and the presence of another believer can help us through a stormy trial.
3. A light sometimes is used to warn! Just as a lighthouse warns the ships in the channel of the dangerous places, so a word spoken in due season may keep a brother or sister from serious trouble or an unwise decision.
4. A light discourages crime. Law officers encourage people to have their houses and yards well lighted, especially in certain

neighborhoods, because light discourages evil deeds. When you and I are in the company of worldly people and family and friends who are not believers, by our faith and godly principles, we may be able to keep the conduct and conversation of the gathering as it should be.

Comfort Ye My People

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye to the heart (comfortably) to Jerusalem.

Isaiah 40:1-2

The ministry of comfort and encouragement is important because it is a command of God to his servants, it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who is called, “The Comforter” and because it is our nature to doubt, to fear, to complain, and to murmur. We must be exhorted to believe, to rejoice, to expect great things from our God, and to look only to Christ and not within! No true servant desires to cry “peace” when there is no peace, but neither do we dare to needlessly burden the Lord's little ones nor rob them of the joy of their Lord. We need not fear that we shall give false hope to the unbeliever; the gospel rightly preached will take care of that.

The Inward Man

Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 4:16,

Time, toil, and stress take their toll on this man of flesh; but the new man created in Christ Jesus is forever young; and these trials and vanities of earth do but turn that inward man to the fountain of life and love, Christ Jesus, and he grows stronger day by day. The man of flesh has his work to do, his duties to fulfill, his place and people to serve until the Lord buries him. But the inward man is not of this world, even as Christ is not of this world; his affection (mind) is on things above, not on things of the earth; and in a sense he is already dead and his life is Christ and his kingdom. Do not expect the natural person (friend or family) to understand the inward man nor the inward man's “magnificent obsession,” Christ Jesus! nor the inward man's fading interest in the things of the earth. “He that is of God heareth us;” he that is not of God has neither eye to see, ear to hear, nor

heart to understand the things God has prepared in Christ—things all inward men have seen and heard and who have a desire to depart here and enter there.

An Outline Worth Repeating

Psalm 23

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want—

1. For rest - “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.”
2. For peace - “He leadeth me beside still waters.”
3. For forgiveness - “He restoreth my soul.”
4. For holiness - “He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.”
5. For fellowship - “For thou art with me.”
6. For comfort - “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”
7. For provisions - “Thou preparest a table before me.”
8. For anything in this world - “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”
9. Or in the world to come - “And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Blood and Water

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

John 19:34

Why did the soldier do this? Was it out of spite or cruelty? They knew that our Lord Jesus had died; that was the reason they did not break his legs as they did the two thieves. But we know why they did not break his legs. “Not a bone of the passover lamb was to be broken” (Exo.12:46); and we know why the soldier pierced his side. Oh yes, that it be established indeed, he is dead, not in a swoon. But this blood which flowed from our passover lamb speaks of justification, and the water which flowed from our smitten rock speaks of the sanctification of his church.

A Broken Heart

Is that which is broken good for anything? One cannot see in a broken mirror; walk with a broken leg, nor drink from a broken glass. Only the heart is at its best state when it is broken.

1. It is acceptable and pleasing to God.
2. It makes up for defects in duties.
3. The Lord saves such as be of a broken heart (Psalm 34:18).
4. “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite heart, and trembleth at my word” (Isaiah 66:2).

The Days of thy Youth

Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth

Ecclesiastes 12:1

“Thy creator” is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One cannot remember, worship, nor know one without the other. Our creation, natural and spiritual, is attributed to our triune God. The word, “remember” is to recognize, think upon, and be mindful of. This is what the dying thief had in mind when he asked to be remembered by our Lord. Remembering our God is not a casual thought, but setting him always before us in love, worship, and thanksgiving.

Young men and women, be mindful of him, believe him, and make him your “first love” in the days of thy youth. God is worthy of the first fruits, when our bodies are healthy, our minds are quick, and our souls capable of being enlarged. To delay our commitment to him is ungrateful (for he is the giver of every gift) and foolish (for no person is sure of tomorrow). Youth has many distractions contrary to godliness, many demands upon your time which do not contribute to spiritual growth, and many duties to family and flesh which take you from church fellowship to spend most of your time with carnal people. You must decide which will control your life and walk “In the days of thy youth while the evil days come not.”

The evil days that are sure to come mean the days of old age. They are called the evil days because old age is attended by weakness of body, decay of intellect, and inability to discern or put together the hopes and mysteries of truth. Young people who live their lives without God come to old age with no pleasure in looking back, no joy in present circumstances, and certainly no hope of eternal life. Those who learn the grace of Christ

early in life live out their days in peace and die with a good hope of glory (Rev. 14:13).

The Grand Design

The grand design of the Heavenly Father in creation, providence, and salvation is to have a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, populated by a holy people out of all nations, perfectly conformed to the likeness of his Son. This work he gave to our Lord Jesus in the eternal council and covenant to accomplish, to perfect, and to deliver to him at the end. And “He shall not fail nor be discouraged,” until all is done!

Salvation Is of The Lord

Suppose that Almighty God had called a council of angels and declared, “I will create man (male and female), but man that I shall create will sin and rebel against me. Now the soul that sinneth must surely die. I will punish all sin; my justice and my law demand that I do so. But God is love; I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful! Tell me, you that are my servants and hasten to do my will, where can my mercy and truth meet? And how can my righteousness and peace kiss each other? How can I deal with sinners in justice and at the same time justify him? How can those who have no righteousness themselves stand before Me, unblameable and accepted? Tell Me, if you can, how God can dwell with men and still be God?”

Those superior heavenly creatures would still be sitting there in silence, for only the wisdom and power of God can plan and accomplish such great salvation! Salvation in Christ, our Substitute, is too splendid, too wise, and too profound to have been the product of any mind except that which could accomplish it. Salvation is of the lord. “He [the Father] hath made him [the Son] to be sin for us [the sinner] who knew no sin [Christ is perfect]; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord) (2 Cor.5:21).

Some Good Advice

This is a day of “hero worship” and “conformity to life-styles set by stars and famous people.” The Lord warns us in Psalm 146:3, “Put not your

trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, in whom there is no help.” Put not your confidence and trust in any man, no matter how high in politics, education, society, or religion. There is no eternal or spiritual good in the flesh, and it has been proved under every circumstance. For us to put our confidence in another man and make him our example and leader is like a beggar looking to another beggar for food, or a blind man reaching for the hand of another blind man to guide him. The Lord Jesus is our God, our shepherd, and our guide. “Jesus, my Shepherd, brother, friend, my prophet, priest, and king, my Lord, my life, my way, my end; accept the praise I bring” (Newton).

Why not put trust and confidence in men? In this same Psalm David gives several reasons. (1) “His breath goeth forth” and he dies. Man is such a frail and impotent creature that for want of a little air, he dies! Should you trust such weakness? (2) “He returns to his earth;” the dust only is his; it is his dirt. He was made from it and he will return to it. Should you trust such poverty? (3) “In that very day his thoughts perish.” When a man dies, all of his thoughts, plans, programs, and ideas perish with him. He withers like the grass, his glory wilts like the flower, and nothing of him remains; for only the word of God abides forever! Should you trust such vapor? Then David writes, “Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God!”

Faith, Hope and Love

There are three main graces. (1) Faith, by which we look to Christ, receive Christ, and live upon him; (2) Hope, by which we wait for the fulfillment of every promise in Christ; and (3) Love to God and men. Yet love exceeds the others as to its duration and use. Faith will give way to sight one day, and hope will become reality; but love shall only expand!

Lord, If It Is to Be, It is Up to Thee

A television preacher recently declared that he needed fifty thousand new supporters if his ministry were to continue. He urged the people to adopt this watchword, “If it is to be—it is up to me!” Now, friends, this may be true of religious organizations and programs; but this preacher and every true servant of God prays this prayer continually, “Lord, if it is to be—it is up to thee!” “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build” (Psa. 127:1).

Let your moderation be known to all

Philippians 4:5

This is the only time the word “moderation” is used in the Bible; and it does not have to do with temperance in food and drink; but it has to do with attitude and conduct. The meaning is “mild and gentle.” Let all people in the church and in the world see and recognize you as a gentle and kind person. Be known, not as harsh and demanding (this seems to be the code of the day), but as “kind and tenderhearted” (Eph. 4:32).

The Sum of Our Gospel

“Christ died for the ungodly.” This is the sum and substance of our gospel and is the great article of faith.

Who died? Christ, the only-begotten, well-beloved Son of God in human nature (Rom. 8:34; Matt. 3:16-17).

How did he die? A death of shame, under the wrath and judgment of God (Phil. 2:8).

Why did he die? He died for, in the stead of, and as a substitute for all God's elect in order that God might be just and justifier (Rom. 3:24-26).

For whom did he die? “For the ungodly,” not for righteous men, nor religious men, nor deserving men, but for those who are ungodly in nature and practice (Eph. 2:1-5).

When did he die for us? When we were without strength to obey him or to keep his law, and without ability to help ourselves. We were in bondage to law and to sin and unable to change our condition (Jer. 13:23). He died for us “in due time,” at the time appointed by the Father (Gal. 4:2-5; 1 Tim. 2:5-6).

This is the greatest single proof of love, to give one's life for the object of that love (1 Jn.4:10; Jn.15:12-13).

Conversion and Conduct

Let us be careful and committed to adorning the gospel of God our Saviour with good works and a godly walk. As a tree is known by its fruit, so a righteous man is known by his conversation and conduct. Good fruit does not make a tree good but shows it to be good. So good works, commitment to our responsibilities, faithfulness in all things do not make us righteous (only Christ can do that) but show us to be so.

Secret Faults

Cleanse me from secret faults.

Psalm 19:12

It is hopeless to expect to see all my spots; therefore David prays, "O Lord, wash away in thy blood even those sins which my conscience has been unable to detect." A hymn writer once wrote, "If I have wounded any soul today; if I have walked in my own willful way; if I have caused one foot to go astray; dear Lord, forgive!"

He Will Make It Good

Look to Christ and not to yourself! He is our surety from everlasting to everlasting. In the covenant of mercy he assumed full responsibility for our, redemption, and he will make it good. His righteousness is perfect, and in him it is mine. His atonement is sufficient to cleanse me from all sin. His intercession, based upon his person and work, must prevail with our reconciled God. "By his stripes we are healed."

Merit and Mercy

The Scriptures plainly say, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life." I plan to leave it right there; adding nothing and taking nothing away. Jesus Christ is the all-sufficient Saviour, and he that believes on him is not condemned. I also add that this matter of justification by faith is the article by which a church, a minister, or a professor of Christianity stands or falls. There is no bridge between merit and mercy. They are as far apart as the poles, and never the twain shall meet.

Jesus Christ Alone

The believer lives on Christ, leans on Christ, and loves the Saviour; his word, his promises, and his people. You can ask him, "What is your hope for acceptance with God?" and he will reply, "The righteousness of Christ Jesus." You can ask him, "What do you trust for the forgiveness of your sin?" and he will tell you, "The blood of Christ Jesus." You can ask him, "In what merit do you hope to stand innocent and justified at the great judgment?" and he will reply, "The intercession and wounds of Christ

Jesus.” You can ask him, “What is the real foundation of your faith and confidence?” and he will say, “The infallible, inerrant, unchanging word of God.”

My Righteousness and Redemption

The mere knowledge of facts about the Bible, and even about the person and work of Christ, will not save us unless that knowledge leads us to really and truly trust our souls in the blessed Redeemer's hands. Faith must act in this fashion: “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he came to save sinners; and therefore, as a sinner, I rest myself on him. I know that his righteousness and blood justify the ungodly; therefore, I trust him to be both my righteousness and my redemption before God.”

If Any Man Sin

*And, if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ the righteous.*

1 John 2:1

This scripture declares that at all times, under all conditions, Jesus Christ is our righteousness, our sanctification, our Advocate, and our redemption. So, when I sin, when I consider my past or present and come creeping to my closet with a guilty conscience and an aching heart, I can rejoice in the mercy of my Father; for I have an Advocate—Jesus Christ the righteous!

The God-Man Mediator

There is a man risen, ascended, and seated at God's right hand. Do you realize what this means? A man born of woman does not the word say, “How can he be clean that is born of woman?” A man who died and was buried; does not the word say, “It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment”? But this man is no ordinary man; he is the God-man. He became a man that he might men redeem. He lived for us that perfect life and died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. The good news is that if there is a man in glory, accepted of God, there can be another and another and another and another—“He is able to save all who come to God by him.”

Starve Out the Old Man

Paul wrote in Colossians 3, “Put off the old man and put on the new man.” The old nature will be with us until we die; therefore, he must be continually put off; suppressed and denied!

One way to put off the old man is to starve him. He is nourished and strengthened when he is in the company of profane and unworldly companions, when he reads suggestive and carnal literature, when he watches certain movies and TV programs, when he is allowed to dwell on malicious or lustful thoughts, and when the conversation he hears is gossip and criticism of others.

Take these things away from the old man, starve him; and rather feed the new man on the things in which he delights and desires.

Willful Sin

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.

Hebrews 10:26

These words have been wrongly made use of to preach that persons who willfully sin after they confess Christ are lost. This is not true, and this type of theology has brought great distress to many honest believers who realize that all of our sins have a degree of willingness! The true sense of the whole chapter is this: after we have embraced the gospel of Christ; that he is the only High Priest, his blood the only atonement, his sacrifice the end and fulfillment of all Old Testament types, ceremonies and days; we sin willfully by denying the sufficiency of our Lord Jesus Christ and turn (as the Galatians) to the Law of Moses; then we have no sacrifice for sin and can expect certain judgment. Moses certainly cannot save; and if, after hearing the gospel of Christ, we turn away from Christ, what hope could one have? If his blood is not sufficient to save his people, there is no hope of salvation.

The Promise of Grace

You may be a child like Timothy, a moral religionist like Saul, an open rebel like Zacchaeus, a business woman like Lydia, an important man like the Eunuch, a hated jailer, a runaway slave, or a dying thief; yet the

promise of grace in Christ is full and free to as many as the Lord our God shall call!

Let Not Worldliness Rob Us

Pray for the Bible classes and worship services today, both here and in every place where our God is glorified, our Lord Jesus is exalted, and his gospel is preached. Without him “we are as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” Are we prepared to worship him? To hear and receive his word? Let not socializing together, common talk, and worldliness rob us of the blessings of worship, prayer and praise.

If the Lord Will

If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.

James 4:15

The Apostle does not condemn the buying and selling of merchandise nor the lawful practice of going about one's business. He is rebuking those who plan and promote those things without consulting the will of God or considering the uncertainty of human life. We must not say that we are going here or there, that we are going to do this or that as if these things are in our power and that we have no dependence on the providence and will of God.

You and I know nothing of tomorrow, nor even if we shall live until then. Therefore, it is foolish and even haughty to determine what we shall do and where we shall go without considering the will of God, in whom we live and move and have our being. “What is your life?” or, what is the nature of your life? We are but a wisp of vapor, a puff of smoke, a mist that is visible for a short time and then disappears. Instead of saying we will go to such and such a place, or we will do this or that, it should be said, “If the Lord is willing, we shall live and we shall do this or that.”

We must be careful not to boast presumptuously of tomorrow, nor of the continuance of life, nor of going to certain places and doing certain things. All such boasting and planning, without regard to the will and providence of our Lord, is evil.

Works of Faith - Labor of Love

1 Thessalonians 1:3

True faith is not historical faith, nor is it a faith that lies only in words. The faith of God's elect is a living, operative grace which works by love and kindness and generosity, both to Christ and others. Will words clothe the naked? Will words feed the hungry? Of course not! In the same way, foolish is the person who thinks that his words of religion will take the place of works of faith. Good works and labors of love are secondary acts which necessarily flow from the life of Christ in a believer, and by those works there is clear evidence that his faith is saving faith.

My Beloved Is Mine and I Am His

Every soul has a beloved; something or someone in which to glory, rejoice, and enjoy. With some it is the world (its vanity, materialism, and honors). With others it is the flesh. They live to entertain the flesh, to satisfy the flesh, and to pamper the flesh. With others it is the family. Close and distant relatives, family trees, family reunions make up their past, present, and future. With others it is religion and works of righteousness. Their religion is not a person; it is a cause to which they are devoted in hope of a suitable reward. And with some it is self, pure and simple; what can we do for me?

To a believer, it is Christ! He worships, loves, rejoices, and glories in the Lord Jesus above all things. Christ is my Beloved, and "My beloved is mine and I am His." Christ (His fellowship, his love, and his approval) is preferred above persons, possessions, pleasures, or pursuits. Could ONE so illustrious and supreme deserve any less? "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee!" (Psalm 73:25).

Two Great Ends

The two great ends of every believer's life are the glory of God and the good of others! As we minister the gospel, love and pray for one another, stand true to the responsibility of our homes and families, and use what God gives to us to meet the needs of his people, both of these ends are served! "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

The Birthright

The birthright which Esau treated with contempt and sold for a morsel of meat was more than material wealth. That birthright was a spiritual trust, God's leader in the family. It carried with it divine favor, spiritual blessings, and responsibility. Esau's desires were sensual and fleshly, so he threw aside the favor of God to satisfy his present appetite. Shall we be so foolish as even to consider that anything the world has to offer is worth departing from the fellowship of the Lord and his people? Men and women who allow things in this world to cause them to abandon their faith and duty as God's children will, like Esau, weep with bitter tears when it is beyond their power to recover what is lost.

Life on this earth is filled with trials, disappointments, and difficult times. Along the way there will be steep mountains and dark valleys, as well as tempting pastures of pleasure which appeal to the flesh. We must continue in the way of Christ; faithful to the gospel of grace, faithful to him who loved us and gave himself to redeem us, faithful to our children, our church family, and all who look to us for guidance. We are seeing far too many of our friends making unwise decisions which may satisfy the flesh and allow them to have their way. But, oh, the price paid by their families, friends, children, church, and ultimately by themselves will result in a repetition of Esau's experience. "For you know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. 12:17).

The End of All Things Is at Hand

1 Peter 4:7

The end of my life is near, I am sure of that, but the end of this world is also near. Our Lord will return, and most men who have some discernment of divine truth believe that the day of the Lord is at the door! Therefore, Peter exhorts us to be serious, be watchful, and call upon God in prayer for his mercy in Christ for ourselves, for our children, and for our kinsmen according to the flesh.

Above all things, have a genuine and unflinching love for one another; for the love of Christ in us will overlook, disregard, and forgive the infirmities and failures of others. If we remember what we were and (except for God's grace) what we would be, and if we really care for the

glory of our gospel and the welfare of others, we will forgive and overlook their infirmities.

Love, generosity, and hospitality are the marks of grace and extend, not only to our families, but to our friends and fellow believers whom God brings our way. We rejoice to show mercy, for we have received mercy; and we rejoice to share with others what God has given us.

There is nothing which we have in nature or grace that is not the gift of God! Therefore, whoever preaches or teaches, let him declare the word according to the scriptures; whoever renders service, let him do it according to the ability and strength God has given him; whoever prays, sings, gives, witnesses, waits on tables, relieves the poor, visits and nurses the sick, or in any way contributes to the kingdom of God, let him do it with strength of purpose, out of love and gratitude to our Lord, and for his glory and the good of his church! “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

Faith Without Works Is Dead

James 2:17

A faith without works is useless; but works without faith are equally worthless.

Good works are not the cause of faith nor do they aid nor assist faith; they are the results of faith, which is the gift of God. They are the proof of faith.

A man may have some good works without having faith in the Lord Jesus; but one cannot have faith in the Lord Jesus and not have good works. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.”

Good works are not an infallible proof of the presence of faith; but the absence of good works clearly shows the absence of faith.

Our Rebukes

Anyone who thinks that God's minister singles him out for rebuke or advice in his messages from the pulpit does not understand preaching nor God's preacher. We seek his message from his word for all of his people gathered in his house. Actually the wise preacher avoids personal problems and trials, knowing that only the word of the Lord applied by the Holy Spirit can change any heart or life. Our rebukes and counsel usually add to the problem.

To Curse and Swear

Those who find it necessary to curse and swear are usually:

1. People of limited wisdom, who have such a small vocabulary and cannot express themselves without filling in the void with curse words.
2. People who do not always tell the truth and so find it necessary to confirm their words by swearing.
3. People who are weak and insecure, but who are trying to appear to be strong by using shocking words.
4. People who have no regard for others. They dump their filthy talk into the ears of others like senseless people dump their trash along the highway.
5. People who have no fear of God nor reverence for his name. “The fool” says in his heart, “no God for me.”

Let your yes be yes and your no, no; whatsoever is more than these comes of evil (Matt. 5:37).

Blessed Preaching

Blessed is the preacher who can shut men up to free and sovereign grace and yet lovingly, sincerely invite all men to look to Christ and be saved. Blessed is the preacher who knows that “salvation is of the Lord,” who has the patience to wait upon the Lord to regenerate, awaken, and call his hearers; yet he prays for their deliverance, urges them to close with Christ, and beseeches them to “be reconciled to God.” Blessed is the preacher who can preach with equal force and confidence both the preservation and the perseverance of believers. God will not, “Turn away from us and we will not depart from him.” Blessed is the preacher who can rejoice in imputed righteousness; “with his holy garments on, I am as spotless as his dear Son;” and yet, along with his congregation, hunger and thirst for spiritual growth and personal godliness. Blessed is the preacher who can find and preach both justification and sanctification at Calvary.

We do not go to Calvary for justification and then to Sinai for sanctification; we are “complete in him.” Blessed is the preacher who can preach prophetic truth in such a way that his hearers are looking for the returning Christ and not only the return of Christ. Blessed is the preacher who administers believers' baptism, presides at the Lord's Table, and oversees the business of the Lord's church, not according to the “way we do it in our circles and according to our custom and tradition,” but

according to the word of God. It may be that if preachers and people return to the Scriptures, someone will ask, “What kind of church is this?” And we can answer, “It is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, which he loved and purchased with his own blood and of which he is the sole Head.”

If Christ Died for Us

1. If the Lord Jesus must die for us, then we must have been under a terrible and impossible sentence of death.
2. If the Father must bruise his dear Son in order to honor his justice in our salvation, there can be no other way for us to be justified.
3. If he died for us when we were yet sinners, enemies, and without hope, the reason had to be found in him and not in us! “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but he loved us!”
4. If Christ died, rose again, ascended to the right hand of majesty, and intercedes for us, then our salvation, acceptance, and eternal glory is as certain as his exaltation.

The Same Promise

The Lord led Jacob all the days of his life. “I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” Do we not have the same promise? He that has begun in you a good work will finish it in the day of Christ (Phil. 1:6).

Salvation Is A Work of God

Nothing more clearly reveals to us that salvation, sanctification, and redemption is the work of our God than to observe the efforts and failure of those who try to accomplish this work for themselves! The disciples asked, “Lord, who then can be saved?” He said unto them, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” It is impossible in the flesh for a man to please God. Yet millions, ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, still go about to establish their own righteousness and will not submit to the righteousness of God, which is Christ Jesus, our Lord. Many keep up this masquerade to the judgment and then plead their works (Matt.

7: 21-23) before God; but most finally lose interest, keep their names on church rolls, and play church on special days. When they die, their preachers try to find some cause on which to give their families hope; but that, too, is impossible; for if Christ is not in you, there is no hope of glory (Col. 1:27). “But he hath begotten us again unto a living hope” (1 Pet. 1:3).

One Chief Reason

If a minister compromises the message of grace and the gospel of our Lord Jesus, we begin to search for reasons. If a prominent church member becomes entangled in the world, business, or any number of interests which take him away from the fellowship or causes him to neglect things spiritual, we begin to search for reasons. One might produce a variety of reasons for this departure from Christ and strong attraction to the flesh, but there is one chief reason—this person has never seen Christ Jesus, our Lord! He has never beheld, in his heart, the great glory, beauty, and sufficiency of Christ. The Lord Jesus has never become to him, “My beloved!” As Solomon said, “I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine” (Song of Sol. 6:3).

John said, “He that seeth the Son and believeth on him hath eternal life” (Jn.6:40). To see Christ as he is, is to lose interest in all others! To see Christ as the ultimate joy, peace, rest, and glory is to cease from all other works and pursuits and enter his rest. To see Christ as God's only anointed Redeemer, complete Saviour, and effectual atonement is to trust him and him alone to save and keep us. To see even the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all the treasures of this world is to walk away from them with no regrets and never look back! To even look back is to perish with Lot's wife. But he that seeth the Son knows that nothing back there is worth comparing to him!

Not Worthy to Be Compared

The sufferings of this present time are many, and they are painful. They cause us to weep and to be sad; they rob us of rest and sleep and make our days dreary and our nights weary; they take from us our mates and our dear children; they cause us to be troubled on every side, perplexed and cast down. But they are not worthy to be compared with the glory of Christ which shall be revealed in us!

Adam As A Figure of Christ

Paul wrote in Rom. 5:14, "Adam is a figure of him that was to come." All of us have preached imputation and representation using Adam as a figure of Christ, our Lord. But Thomas Bradbury added this: "Adam was not deceived in the transgression; he sinned with his eyes wide open. He knew what he was doing. Adam sinned out of love for his wife; and before he would be parted from her, he would be damned with her." Is not this a picture of our Lord Jesus?

Adam loved Eve when she was fallen and he yet stood, when she was a sinner and he was sinless, when she was covered with guilt and he was free from both. He loved her in spite of all! Here is a marvelous picture of our Redeemer, who loved us even when we were dead in sin and took our guilt willingly. Well may we cry, "O Jesus, what a love is Thine!"

Blessings Enjoyed by Older Believers

1. They are "almost home."
2. They not only have God's promises, but have experienced the fulfilling of them many times.
3. They do not entertain any doubts about the gospel of God's sovereign grace and Christ's effectual atonement. They know that salvation is and has to be of the Lord.
4. They are not alarmed nor swayed by new voices and persuasive preachers. They have seen too many of them fall away to ever allow them to follow a man.
5. Their many failures have left them humbled, emptied of any confidence in this flesh and totally dependent on his mercy and grace in Christ Jesus.

Read and Rejoice

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away.

John 16:7

Our Lord told his disciples of his death, of his return to the Father, and of the persecution they would certainly endure for his sake. Their hearts were heavy and filled with sorrow. He said, "I go my way and none of you asketh me whither goest thou; nevertheless, though you ask me no

questions, I tell you that it is absolutely necessary for you that I die on the cross, rise again, and go to the Father.” His death atoned for our sins, removed the curse of the law, enabled God to be just and justify us, secured peace with God, and gave us a perfect holiness. By his sacrifice, we have a great High Priest, Advocate, Intercessor with the Father. As our forerunner, he has entered within the veil into the very presence of the Father and taken us with him.

“For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you” (John 16:7). The Holy Spirit was certainly here before; for he preached through Noah, revealed the word to the prophets, and “the Spirit of Christ was in them” (1 Peter 1:11), Peter said. But he had not come in so special and peculiar a manner as he would come to believers after Christ was glorified! He dwells in every believer as our comforter, teacher, guide, and the glorifier of Christ Jesus. Had not our Lord died, risen, and ascended to the Father, there would have been nothing for the Holy Spirit to do; no blood to sprinkle, no salvation to apply, no righteousness to reveal, and no comfort to give! Christ said, “He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you” (Jn.16:14).

The King Said So

The Emperor Napoleon was reviewing his troops in front of his palace in Paris. As he was giving his orders, he let go of the reins of his horse, which immediately ran off. A Private of the line, a strong and agile man, leaped in front of the horse, skillfully seized hold of the bridle, and returned it to the Emperor, who said to him, “Thank you, captain!” Without hesitation the soldier asked, “What regiment, sir?” “My guards,” answered his emperor!

This illustrates what it means to take someone at his word who is trustworthy. If I do not see in myself the evidence, the results of what God has promised, do I have the right to believe it? Yes, because he said it. This soldier was not dressed as a captain, but he was a captain: the king said so!

All Things Are of God

The advocates of free-will and Arminianism seek to arouse man's activity; preachers of God's grace in Christ seek to kill man's works once for all, to show men that they are lost and ruined in Adam, that their works and

religious activities (apart from Christ) only add to their condemnation. They cry for men to stand up for Jesus; we seek to bring men down and make them feel that they are “a wretch undone without his sovereign grace.” They feel that a man is saved when he says, “I can believe, I can pray, I can accept Jesus, I can do this and that.” We hold that a man is never so near to the grace of God and salvation as when he feels that he can do nothing at all which is acceptable or pleasing to God! When a man is brought to the dust of helplessness, guilt, and lostness, and cries, “Lord, be merciful to me, the sinner,” then we think that God may be calling him and may have begun a work of grace in his soul. If there is one work, deed, or thing for men to do in order to be saved, then all things are not of God, and we are all lost men. Thank God, “All things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 5:18).

Salvation Is of The Lord

Jonah 2:9

The greatest encouragement to a sinner comes from the good news that “salvation is of the Lord.” Sinner, look to Christ, rest in Christ, rejoice in Christ. Salvation is of the Lord! “But I am naked;” the robe of righteousness is of the Lord! “I am filthy;” the washing is in the blood of the Lord! “I am guilty;” the pardon is of God! “I am hard-hearted;” he will give you a new heart! “I don't know if I can believe as I should;” faith is the gift of God! “I may not be able to keep the way;” we are kept by the power of the Lord, through faith! “I can't pray;” he maketh intercession for us! “What if I sin?” You will; and we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; past, present, and future! “I have nothing to bring to God;” you are not called to give, but to receive! You are called to BRING nothing, to BE nothing, and to DO nothing. You are called to Christ! He is all and in all! Cease from self, sinner, and look to Christ. “Salvation is of the Lord.”

“Alright, preacher, I am willing to bow and to receive Christ only as my God and Saviour.” I reply, “Are you willing? Well, never forget that even your willingness to receive Christ is God's gift!” “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power” (Psalm 110:3). Salvation is of the Lord.

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1998

Perilous Times

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves.

2 Timothy 3:1-2

When Paul speaks of “the last days,” he means the days following the incarnation of our Lord Jesus. We have the days from Adam to Moses, the days from Moses to Christ's death on the cross, and the last days from Calvary to the end of this world. Some people believed that these last days would be a time of peace, holiness, and obedience to God and his word, especially in the churches and among professing Christians. But Paul warns Timothy and all true believers to expect perilous times, hard and difficult times, during these last days; not because of outward calamities, scarcity of food, and dangers from the sword, but by reason of the wickedness of men and women who profess religion and yet serve themselves. He gives a description of these formal professors and false preachers; “They shall be lovers of their own selves; covetous people.”

This is put first because error and hypocrisy and covetousness flows from self-love! He who loves himself does not love Christ, does not love nor care for the sheep, and has no real concern for the glory of God. Self-love promotes applause, love for money, recognition for service, and using the ministry for personal gain and comforts. These men always promote themselves and their ministry and lean heavily on the arm of the flesh, not knowing what it is to wait on the Lord and to trust his divine providence for their bread and direction. May the Lord give all of us discerning hearts and deliverance from “lovers of their own selves.”

“Send us men, O King in Zion,
Made according to Thine heart,
Meek as lambs, and bold as lions,
And wise to act the shepherd's part;
Clothe their words with power Divine,
And let their words be only thine.”

Grace to Those Who Are Humbled

*God resisteth the proud; but giveth grace to the humble;
submit yourselves therefore to God.*

James 4:6-7

The certain way to overcome pride and defeat the spirit of envy, strife, and contention is to submit ourselves to God!

1. To his will regarding gifts, talents, and earthly possessions.
2. To leave it to God to make us what he would have us to be.
3. To leave it to God to prosper us or empty us, to honor us or humble us.
4. To wait on the Lord. “Waiting, I waited for his will to be revealed.”

Solomon said, “He that maketh haste to be rich shall suffer” (Prov.28:20, 22).

Before, During, and After the Sermon

Quite often, after a sermon is over, people are heard to say, “Preacher, you sure stepped on my toes today,” or “My, my, the preacher sure skinned us today.” Somehow, I feel that this type of response to the preaching of God's word indicates that there is something wrong with either the preaching or the hearing. When one can lightly pass off the profound mysteries of the gospel of God's mercy with such meaningless comments, either he has not heard the glorious good news, or it has not been properly presented.

When the Master preached to his disciples, they said, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he opened to us the Scriptures?” When Peter preached at Pentecost, it is said, “They were pricked in their hearts and cried, men and brethren, what shall we do?” When Paul turned to the Gentiles with the gospel, the Scripture says, “They were glad and glorified

the word of the Lord.” This is so different from departing from the assembly with the flippant remark, “Well, he sure stepped on my toes.”

There is a duty to be performed before, during, and after the sermon. My responsibility is to get a message from the Lord, bathe it in prayer and preparation, and seek the fullness of God's Spirit. Your responsibility before the sermon is to pray for me and prepare your heart to hear the Word. Coming into God's presence is no light matter; it is a most serious business. During the sermon, let everyone hear with attention, interest, and an open heart. After the sermon, let every individual seek to apply the word to both heart and life by retaining the preached word in thought and conversation.

The Bereans heard the apostles then, “searched the word to see if these things be so!” Our Lord condemned the Pharisees, saying, “My word hath no place in you” (John 8:37). Let's give his word the place it merits; first place! He has graciously promised to bless that word to his glory and to our eternal good!

Divine Election

Divine election gives all glory to God, brings joy to a sinner's heart, promotes genuine humility, comforts us in the darkest valley, is the only foundation of assurance and peace, is our encouragement to preach the gospel; for he shall call his elect and enables us to die with a good hope of life eternal!

If Any Man Be in Christ, he Is A New Creature

There is no subject more important than the nature and extent of the inward change that takes place when a man is savingly joined to Christ. Some think that this sanctification is God's work and that man has nothing to do with it. They say that God saves us, sanctifies us, and works his will in us, and we need give no concern to the matter of holiness. Others think that the work of sanctification and personal holiness is man's work entirely, that God gives the means and waits to see what we will make of ourselves.

Peter cuts both of these errors out by the roots. On the one hand he teaches that we are the elect of God, born of the Spirit, given a new nature, a new heart, a new direction, and indwelt by the Spirit of God. But on the

other hand, this dramatic change is accomplished through knowledge and belief of the truth (2 Thess. 2:13; Mark 16:15-16). We are born again, but we are babes who must mature and grow. God has appointed means of growth; the Word, prayer, worship, fellowship, trials, personal determination and effort (2 Pet. 1:5-8). “God worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure” (Phil.2:12-13).

Who Was Crucified?

And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called Golgotha.

John 19:17

These people made him carry his cross. He carried it as long as he was physically able, then a man called Simon of Cyrene was ordered to take over the difficult task. Compelling him to carry his own cross added to the shame. Much speculation and tradition surround the place where he was crucified, but there are no facts to support much of it. We know that he was crucified outside the city, a place of execution and evidently on a hill. But the important thing is not where the crucifixion took place, but who was crucified? Christ, the God-man died! Why was he crucified? For the sins of his people! What did he accomplish? “By himself purged our sins” and enabled a holy God to be just and justify those who believe. One might find the actual spot where Christ died and the actual cross on which he hung and be no better off for it! Forgiveness of sin and redemption are in Christ through faith in him, not by contact with so-called holy places, relics, and tradition.

Lovest Thou Me?

John 21:17

Peter was grieved when the Lord asked him the third time, “Lovest thou me?” It has been suggested that the Lord asked this question three times because Peter had denied him three times. I'm sure that the memory of that incident added to Peter's grief that the Lord should keep repeating the same question. So, Peter appealed to the Lord's complete knowledge of all things, of all men's hearts and thoughts, and replied, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.” This is the vital issue and question of questions for all professed Christians: “Do you love Christ?” It

is not do you love the word, the doctrine of grace, the church, the law, the people of God, though you will certainly love them if you love Christ. But do you love him? This is where life and hope and grace live; love for Christ!

To me to Live Is Christ and to Die Is Gain

Philippians 1:21

“To me to live is Christ.” He is the giver of life. By his will I live, and by his will I shall die. He is the sum and substance of life. Without him this worldly sojourn would be miserable. He is the hope of eternal life. He has prepared the place and us for the place and will come again to receive us, “Unto himself,” to be with him and to be like him.

“And to die is gain.” I will gain release from this natural body of weakness, pain, and discomfort to a perfect body of strength and youth. I will be released from a sinful nature of shame, fear, and flesh to holy, sinless perfection; incorruptible and undefiled! Ignorance, doubt, and misunderstandings shall all be done away, and “I shall know as I have been known of him.” No more trials, troubles, nor sorrows; and no more death; unbroken fellowship and joy with our family of faith! Oh, the joys and peace in God's tomorrow!

“For I am in a strait betwixt two.” I am hard-pressed between these two thoughts; either to live and labor (which may be better for you and those who benefit from my labor of love) or to die and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. If it is the will of God for me to live longer or to depart, it is not mine to choose. The decision is his and is both wise and good, whatever it be. “Lord, give me the grace to accept either way with wisdom and submission.”

“It is not death to die,
To leave this weary road,
And, with our family on high
To be at home with God.

Saviour, thou prince of life,
Your chosen cannot die;
We but leave a world of strife
To reign with thee on High.”

True Faith Believes the Promises of God

Noah went into the ark before one drop of water fell! If he had waited until the rain commenced, he would have been joined by thousands of false converts. True faith believes the promises of God and the warnings of God *before* they come to pass. A refuge built or entered during the storm is usually forsaken when the sun shines again. Be wary of those who seek the Lord when their flesh is pained.

When She Saw his Wisdom and Glory

When the Queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon and the temple that he had built, there was no more spirit in her.

1 Kings 10:4-5

She heard in her own country about the glory of Solomon's kingdom, so she came to see and to prove him with questions. He told her all her questions; and when she saw his wisdom, glory, and his ascent to the temple of the Lord, she was so overwhelmed and awed that she couldn't speak! This is a picture of the seeking sinner who hears of Christ, comes to him, and has revealed to him the wisdom, glory, and exaltation of the Lord Jesus at God's right hand. He, like Mary, sits at his feet unable to find words to say. Be concerned about the *wordy* new converts, not the one who cannot find words to express his joy and vision of Christ, the Redeemer.

Faith Is Not Presumption

Augustine once said, “To be assured of our interest in Christ is not arrogance; it is faith. It is not pride; it is devotion. It is not presumption; it is God's promise.” If assurance of salvation rested in my works, it would be presumption (even foolishness); but we believe God will receive all who come to him in Christ Jesus.

He Who Waters Will Also Be Watered Himself

Proverbs 11:25

This text teaches a great lesson; to receive, we must give; to accumulate, we must scatter; to be happy, we must make others happy; to have friends, we must be friendly; in teaching others, we gain instruction. It is like the man in the snowstorm who rubbed the limbs of his friend to keep him from freezing, and in so doing kept his own blood circulating and thus saved his own life! “He who waters is watered.” “Give and it shall be given you” (Luke 6:38).

I Believe God

J. C. Ryle once said, “I warn all men that knowledge not acted upon, in God's sight, is no knowledge at all! A faith which does not influence a man's walk and talk is not worthy of the name faith.” There are only two classes of people in this world; those who believe God and those who do not believe God! Those who believe God do mind (are concerned with, interested in, and identified with) the things of God, and those who do not believe God so mind (pursue, love, and run after) the things of the flesh and the world. The difference lies in one word; I *believe* God.

The Lord's Table

The Lord willing, we will worship our Lord this Wednesday evening at the Lord's Table. Paul sets forth in 1 Cor. 11:23-29 the way it should be observed.

1. He tells how he came by the knowledge of it--the Lord himself.
2. He sets forth the author of it--the Lord himself.
3. He gives the time of the institution of it--the night he was betrayed and arrested.
4. He lists the materials of it--bread and wine. The bread represents his body, broken, and the wine his blood, which was shed for us. The wine and bread do not actually become the blood and body of our Lord, but they represent or symbolize his blood and body. “This do in remembrance of

me,” said our Lord, not as a means of salvation or cleansing, but in order to keep fresh in our minds and hearts his love and sacrifice for our sins and his constant intercession now on our behalf. We not only remember his death, but we show, declare, or proclaim to all, our confidence in his substitutionary work.

5. No time nor day is specified for the observance of it. “As often as ye eat” you do show forth the Lord's death! How long shall the church continue to gather about this table? “Till he comes.”

Christ In You

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed!

John 6:55

It is not just eating that nourishes and gives life but eating good food. If a man eats poison, he will die. It is so spiritually. Christ's flesh is true life-giving meat, and his blood is saving blood. A person is not saved because he believes and receives something or someone. But “Christ in you is the hope of glory.” “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life...dwelleth in me and I in him.”

Bread and Wine

Recently, as we gathered to observe the Lord's Table, I tried to again show how the bread and wine set forth the sacrifice of our Lord for us. “This is my body broken for you...This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:19-20).

It occurred to me that we come to Christ himself and receive Christ much as we come to this table.

We bring nothing to the table! We leave our homes and come to the table of bread and wine, having absolutely nothing of our own to contribute.

The Lord is the server; it is his table! No man is elevated above another to officiate or serve. All partake alike of his body and his blood.

We receive the bread and wine inwardly! It is not something sprinkled upon us, conferred upon us, worn by us, nor professed by us. It is the Lord's life received within us; Christ himself in you, the hope of glory.

We receive the bread and wine personally! In the matter of salvation, it is “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood.” Absolutely no one is involved in what I eat and drink spiritually but me and him who is my bread. Only what I eat can give me life. “Let a man examine himself and so let him eat.”

Save Yourselves

As Peter, the apostle, closed his great sermon on the day of Pentecost, he cried, “Save (deliver) yourselves from this untoward (crooked, perverse) generation.” He was saying, “Come out from, separate yourselves from a perverted and wicked people. Do not adopt their ways, their philosophies, nor their ideas and perish with them. Turn to the way of our Lord.”

I take up his cry today and exhort all of you young people to deliver yourselves from your generation which is crooked and perverted, especially in the matters of family, marriage, and sex. Their thoughts toward these and their acceptance of homosexuality is shameful and wicked and will bring God's wrath on this nation, as it brought his wrath on Sodom. “Marriage is honorable in all, and the marriage bed is undefiled and holy before God. But whoremongers, adulterers, homosexuals, fornicators, idolaters, effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:9).

To Hear the Word Is Safe for You

To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not tiresome, but for you it is safe (necessary).

Philippians 3:1

We never grow weary of preaching the word of our Lord, the gospel of his grace; and we never tire of gathering together in his name to worship, pray, and fellowship with his people. The old story is forever new; the familiar scriptures are fresher and sweeter with every taste.

1. To often hear his word preached is to keep our hearts and minds on Christ, the fountain of life.
2. To often hear his word preached is a safeguard against false doctrine and false teachers. An untaught child is more easily led astray than one, “taught of God.”

3. To often hear his word preached guards against self-righteousness. No danger of a person who is often in the presence of his holiness seeing any merit in himself.
4. To often hear his word preached refreshes our spirits, brings peace to our hearts, and beauty to our countenances. One can look at flowers and readily see which flowers are most often watered!

No Condemnation

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

John 3:17

The coming of our Lord was not to condemn the world; the world was already condemned! “By the offense of Adam judgment came upon all men to condemnation” (Rom. 5:18). Our Lord came into the world that men and women of all nations might be saved. The phrase “might be saved” does not express any uncertainty about the fact of their being saved in Christ; but the word “might” expresses design! He came and died in order that sinners could be saved! His person and work on behalf of sinners enable our Holy God to be both just and the justifier of those who believe. For the believer there is no condemnation because Christ was condemned in our stead. But the unbeliever is condemned already. He enters the world with the curse of sin in him and upon him. When he encounters the mercies, gospel, and grace of God and does not believe, he incurs a new and increased condemnation through unbelief! (Matt. 11:20-24).

Thank God for Grace and Truth

*For the law was given by Moses,
but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*

John 1:17

Grace and truth are his own perfections. In Christ grace and truth are inseparable, joined together. One cannot have grace without truth, nor truth without grace. The grace which saves a sinner is not moral weakness nor a mere sentimental invitation; but it is the grace of God (who cannot lie) which is established on the principles of a law honored and justice

satisfied by our Redeemer. The grace of Christ does not set aside the law and its requirements. No! It establishes the law! Grace establishes the law because it has a Substitute who perfectly fulfilled every jot and tittle and endured the penalty of sin for all who believe.

Law manifests what is *in* men, sin! Grace manifests what is in God, love!

Law demands *righteousness* from men! Grace brings the righteousness of God to men!

Law *sentences* men to death! Grace gives life to dead men!

Law speaks of what men must *do*! Grace tells what Christ has done!

Law gives a *knowledge* of sin! Grace puts sin away! Puts it away forever to be remembered no more. Thank God for grace and truth!

Assurance and Growth Through Preaching

These things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 John 5:13

How is faith confirmed and strengthened? How is faith increased? Even by having the person and work, the office and power of our Lord Jesus Christ preached and explained to us again and again. Eternal life is to be found nowhere but in Christ; and in order for those who are already in Christ to have assurance of their interest in him and to grow in grace and faith, the pastor is to magnify over and over again the glorious gospel of his blood and righteousness. These things are written not only to encourage sinners to believe on Christ and come to him, but these things are written to confirm the faith of those who do believe and to give them confidence and assurance of God's love and mercy to them in our Redeemer.

Will You Also Go Away?

John 6:67

Our Lord will have no unwilling disciples. So, upon the departure of the crowd who followed him for various reasons, he turned to the twelve and

said, "Will you also go away?" His question is a strong test which is put to all followers, and their answer will reveal whether or not a divine work of grace has been wrought in them.

The Apostle Peter acted as the spokesman for the twelve, and I hasten to join him and make his reply mine!

"Lord to whom shall we go?" Shall we turn to the law? Nothing there but a curse. Shall we turn to religion? Nothing there but dead works and superstition. Shall we turn to our wisdom and righteousness? Nothing there but filthy rags.

"Thou hast the words of eternal life." Thou art the word of life! Thy word gives life! It is by thy word that we live, even as Lazarus came forth from the grave when you called. "In thee we live, move, and have our being."

"We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Oh, yes! By thy grace we do believe and are sure. Notice the order here. Natural men demand to be sure before they believe. God reverses the order. It is impossible to be sure or have confidence of a saving interest in Christ until we believe him!

Lord, we believe that thou art that Christ; promised, prophesied, and pictured throughout all the scriptures. The false professors may draw back and depart, but none who truly believe and receive him and have tasted of his mercies and presence shall ever depart.

His Resurrection Is Proof

“Tis finished; the great transaction's done;
I am my Lord's, and he is mine.”

Nothing need nor can be added to his work. “It is finished,” and the proof of the accomplishment and acceptance of all that he did is his resurrection from the dead! (Acts 17:31).

Gospel Repetition

To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous (tiresome); but for you it is safe.

Philippians 3:1

I rejoice to repeat the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ over and over again. I certainly have no better message to preach nor better tidings to bring. The good news of God's grace to us in Christ is the best news one can hear, and to hear it over and over again will:

1. Keep our hearts and thoughts on HIM who is the fountain of life!
2. Be a constant guard against false teachers and their Christ-less message!
3. Keep us from self-righteousness and other errors as we “remember the pit from which we were digged” (Isa. 51:1) and the one who lifted us out.

Some Striking Contrasts Found in John 3 And 4

1. In John 3 a man named Nicodemus; in John 4 an unnamed woman.
2. In John 3 a man of high rank; in John 4 a poor woman.
3. In John 3 a favored Jew; in John 4 a despised Samaritan.
4. In John 3 a man of strict morals; In John 4 a woman with no morals.

5. In John 3 Nicodemus sought out Christ; in John 4 Christ sought the woman.
6. In John 3 Christ talked to Nicodemus about something he could not do, “Ye must be born again;” to the sinful woman something she should do, “Ask of me and I will give you living water.”

The Promises of God

“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Cor. 1:20). All the promises of God are in him because only he was with the Father when the promises were made. They are all in him because they were given to him to fulfill. They are all in him because on the cross he fully paid all that was required for them to be ours. They are all in him because only he is sufficient and great enough to contain them. And all these promises are ours in him!

Let us conduct ourselves before our families, fellow-workers, neighbors, and friends in an honest, righteous, and loving manner, so that even though they do not believe our gospel and speak of us as radicals (or whatever), yet when real trial and examination is put upon us, when God visits us and them with affliction and trouble, or when God prospers us and allows us to be stewards of many possessions, they must admit that we are different! That we have a grace, peace, and generosity which they do not have! Sometimes God visits us in prosperity, sometimes in disappointment, sometimes in joy, sometimes in sorrow. How we conduct ourselves under these different tests will determine whether those who observe us glorify God or doubt the sincerity of our profession and the power of our gospel.

By doing good works, by living honest lives, by a kind and humble spirit before God and men, we will take away from the enemies of the gospel of grace one of their chief weapons; A critical tongue! Not that we walk in truth and love for that reason at all; but your labor of love, works of faith, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus will silence the ignorant charges and ill-informed criticisms of foolish people!

Eternal Life Promised

This is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life.

1 John 2:25

There is no life eternal apart from union with the Lord Jesus. The Father put the “promise of life” and all other promises in Christ. He is our life, and the sum of the gospel is that all who believe on him have eternal life. The beginning of life is found in Christ, the continuation of that life is continuing in the faith of Christ, and the ultimate perfection of that life is being made like Christ eternally. “And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming” (1 John 2:28).

God Cannot Lie

Paul began his epistle to Titus with these words, “In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began.” Eternal life is a promise, not a reward nor a wage, but a sure and faithful promise. And eternal life is sure to all who believe because it is the promise of God, who cannot lie! Eternal life is the promise of God by his word. Of course, his word is written, but spoken to us by his Son, who is the word of God. Eternal life was promised to his elect before the world began, “but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 1:10). You who love and believe our Lord Jesus Christ should have no doubts nor fears regarding your future, but rest in Christ. “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Can the eternal God deny his Son? or his word? Neither can he deny you!

Husbands, Love Your Wives

Ephesians 5:25-30

This is still and always will be the key to any relationship. Because Christ loved us, he gave himself for us! Because we love Christ, his yoke is easy and his burden is light. Because we love our children, we never forsake them nor leave them to provide for themselves. Because we love our parents, we would never think of disowning nor neglecting them. Well,

marriage is the establishment of a new home; a new family of parents, children, and people united in love and holy vows before God; and there should be no thought of any member of that family casting off, deserting, nor forsaking the others. The world may do this, but not believers. Our Lord plainly defined the evidence and proof of discipleship; “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another” (John 13:35). Love does not leave a beloved! Love bestows the best on the object of affection. In verse 28 Paul insists that we are to “love one another as we love ourselves.” No man, he says, ever hated, deserted, forsook, nor disowned his own body. So, I insist that the very thought of forsaking wife and children and the testimony of Christ would be offensive to a believer. Christ has never forsaken me; how can I turn my back on those I love?

Christ Is Our Altar

We have an altar
Hebrews 13:10

The reference is to the eating of the sacrifice by the priests in the Old Testament (Lev. 6:14-16). The sacrifice was offered, burned upon the altar, and eaten by the priests. We have an altar; not the cross, nor a bench at the front of the church, nor the mass, but Christ himself. He is altar, sacrifice, and priest. We come to him, eat of his flesh, and drink of his blood (John 6:53-57).

Our Thoughts and Ways Are Not Gods

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

Isaiah 55:9

Our thoughts are not God's thoughts, and our ways are not God's ways. This is evident in all things. But the primary reference here is concerning God's thoughts and God's way of redeeming sinners! Our thoughts and ways (which seem right to the natural mind) are the ways of deeds and works and will lead to death. Naaman, when confronted with God's way, said, “I thought.” Does anyone think that God can accept an imperfect righteousness or pardon a sinner without his justice being fully honored?

Suppose he did! Suppose that without Christ's righteousness and blood God accepted us. What peace could we have?

1. A god who can pardon without justice may one day condemn without reason.
2. A god who can set aside his holiness may one day set aside his mercy.
3. A god who can deny his law may one day deny his gospel.
4. A god who can change his character may one day change his mind and his promises.

Four Things God Taught King Nebuchadnezzar

Those who know the living God, who have seen a little of his glory and majesty in the face of our Lord Jesus, are troubled by the low opinion that men today have of the Lord God. There is little reverence and “no fear of God before their eyes.” They speak of God as if he were a creature like them; “thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself” (Psa. 50:21). Such trash, triviality and frivolity are permitted in the pulpit and in the church in the name of God. The familiarity, irreverence, and loose talk about the Lord God is unheard of in the scriptures and unknown among our ancient fathers. No one ever accused old King Nebuchadnezzar of being a prophet, but the Lord taught him the fear of the Lord. He learned four things and passed them on to us in Daniel 4:34-37.

1. He learned the greatness, majesty, and sovereignty of God! “I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion.”
2. He learned that man is nothing! “And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing.”
3. He learned the will of God is unchangeable and shall be done! “He doeth according to his will in heaven and in earth and none can stay his hand or question him.”
4. He learned that those who walk in pride the Lord will abase! “And those who walk in pride he is able to abase.”

Bless the Lord, O My Soul

This is the highest form of praise; not just my lips, but my heart, my innermost being, my soul loves and blesses his dear name. Let my

judgment bless him by submitting to his word. Let my imagination bless him by holy meditation. Let my affections bless him by loving what he loves. Let my desires bless him by seeking his will. Let my hope bless him by restful assurance and peace. “Bless the Lord, O my soul.” Heart praise is evidence of spiritual maturity; more praise and less petition, more gratitude and less, “give me.” As we are enabled to grow in grace, our prayers change with the greater emphasis on thanksgiving.

If You Love Me, Feed My Sheep

Peter was grieved when the Lord asked him the third time, “Lovest thou me?” It has been suggested that the Lord asked this question three times because Peter denied him three times. I'm sure that the memory of that incident added to Peter's grief that the Lord should keep repeating this same question. Peter appealed to the Lord's complete knowledge of all things, of all men's hearts and thoughts, and replied, “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.” This is the vital issue and question of questions for all professed Christians “Do you love Christ?” It is not, “Do you love the word, the doctrine, the church, the law, the people of God?” though you certainly will love them if you love Christ. But do you love him? This is where life and hope and grace are born—love for Christ (1 Cor.16:22).

Again, the Lord said, “Feed my sheep.” It may be observed from the repetition of this phrase following Peter's declaration of love for Christ that the only proper persons to feed the Lord's sheep are those who truly love him! There are pretended shepherds who feed themselves and in time of trouble leave the flock, or who feed goats and not sheep, or who feed them not with the true bread. But since the work is so laborious, the opposition from the religious world so great, the reproach of the world so constant, and the conflict with powers of darkness so real, only true lovers of Christ faithfully perform the work of feeding the sheep. They are faithful to preach and teach the word because they love Christ, they love the gospel of his grace, and they love his sheep. They also know that God will bless, honor, and prosper his preached word (Isa. 55:11). They are motivated by Christ's love for them and their love for him (2 Cor. 5:9-15).

Christ our Life

I am the resurrection and the life. . . believest thou this?

John 11:25-26

Because he is God, because he is our surety, righteousness, and redemption, because he lives, we live! Because in him dwells all the fullness of God, the blessed life of God, then we are complete in him. Life and resurrection are not only a blessing and experience that Christ purchased for us, but he is our life! We can no more die than he can. We can no more be separated from the Father than he can. We are one with Christ. The doctrines of salvation, resurrection, and eternal glory are only understood in the light of the person and work of our Redeemer, Christ Jesus! “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:4). And when that day dawns, when this old flesh is in the dust, and when we stand in his likeness, it will be as impossible for us to sin, to fail, or to die as it is for him to die.

The Mystery of Godliness

Have you paid attention to what the word declares in 1 Tim. 3:16, “The mystery of godliness”?

“God was manifest in the flesh.” Wonder of wonders; the mighty God became a man, took on himself the likeness of our sinful flesh.

“He was justified (vindicated) in the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit was given him without measure! All his works done in the power of the Spirit.

“Seen of angels;” served by angels, who announced his birth, his resurrection, and his return and ministered to him throughout his days on earth.

“Preached to the Gentiles;” who were strangers, aliens from Israel, without Christ, having no hope and without God in this world. God will have a people among the Gentiles.

“Received up into glory.” The man, Christ Jesus, in glorified flesh is received, accepted, exalted, and seated at God's right hand, and we in him.

But along with all these mysteries, miracles, and wonders is a statement we are apt to miss; a miracle, mystery, and wonder as great as the others! “He is believed on in the world.” Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God! It requires the same power and will of God to make sons of Adam the sons of God as it took to make the Son of God a son of man! Saving faith is a miracle of grace. To believe the gospel

of Christ requires a miracle of regeneration, revelation, and preservation; all the gift of God!

Christ Redeemed his Church

And they sang a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 5:9-10

This scripture does not tell us that Christ died, shed his blood, and redeemed everyone in every nation. It clearly states that he was slain and did redeem to God by his blood a people (His church) *out of* every tongue and people. And when those whom the Father chose in Christ, for whom the Saviour died, hear that good news of free redemption proclaimed in the power of his Holy Spirit, they will believe! Acts 13:48 declares, “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

No Change with God

Some of our dear friends have been through some severe trials, and others are now suffering in heart and body. All of us wish to witness a good confession and maintain an attitude and conversation which will help and inspire others and glorify our Lord. But pain is pain. The loss of a dear child or mate is overwhelming, and we are still in this body of flesh. Therefore, let it be known to all that we believe and are sure that our Lord is the first cause of all things, and we bless his name and trust his word whatever the circumstances. The following words by Charles Spurgeon sum up our confession!

“The Christian knows no change with regard to God. He may be rich today and poor tomorrow; he may be sickly today and well tomorrow; he may be in happiness today and tomorrow be in distress; but there is no change with regard to his relationship with God. If he loved me yesterday, he loves me today. I am neither better nor worse in God than I ever was.

Let prospects be blighted, let hopes be blasted, let joy be withered, let mildews destroy everything; I have lost nothing of what I have in God!”

Habits or A New Heart

Religion can change one's habits; it takes the grace of God to create a new heart!

Faith Relies Upon Christ

The medium by which the gospel becomes the power of God is *faith*. Faith is a reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ for all the blessings, benefits, ends, and purposes for which the gospel reveals him, such as pardon of sin, peace of conscience, strength for obedience, and eternal life. It is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit through his word and presupposes a knowledge of him and of ourselves, of our emptiness and his fullness, of our unworthiness and his merits, of our weakness and his power. The true believer believes, receives, and builds upon the person and work of Christ as the foundation of his hope; he enters by him as the only door to the knowledge, communion, and love of God; he feeds upon him as the only bread of life; he embraces him as his redemption, wisdom, and sanctification; he derives all his strength and comfort from him.

I Will Even Pay for The Wood

Foxe tells of a believer who had been condemned to be burned. Burning martyrs, however delightful to the priests, was also expensive. The town mayor did not want to buy the wood, and the priests who had accused him did not care to spend their money. So, they had an angry squabble. The believer spoke, “Gentlemen, I will end your dispute; and for my Lord's glory, I will even pay for the wood that burns me, if you please.” Spurgeon wrote this and said, “I do not know that I would have paid the bill, but I do feel inclined to go out of the way and help the enemies of grace to find fuel to criticize me. Yes, I will be more positive and plain in declaring his sovereignty, his blood, and his grace, and give them more to complain of!”

Our Constant Hope

The gift of life and calling to grace is without change. The command, “Look unto me and be ye saved,” is not only the hope and strength of the seeking sinner, but it is the constant hope and strength of the believing sinner. I know my sins, but I rejoice in his grace. I know my weakness, but I rest in his strength. I know my emptiness, but I am complete in him.

No Justification by The Deeds of The Law

I know a person cannot be justified by the deeds of the law nor the works of the flesh!

1. I know it from the law itself, which requires perfection. “Tell me,” Paul wrote, “Ye that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?”
2. I know it from the gospel, which clearly states that “In Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and we are complete in him.” A friend said, “What is there about *complete* that you do not understand?”
3. I know it from experience! “In my flesh dwelleth no good thing;” and if I should attempt to justify myself, my own mouth would condemn me.
4. I know it from the very nature of Christ's work. “Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins;” and “When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.”

A Puzzling Problem

It has for centuries been a great temptation to many talented men to spend their time studying, arguing, and quarreling over sovereignty and responsibility, Sabbath days and church government, prophetic speculation and future events, when they would have been better employed and more greatly used of God in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I was greatly impressed, while reading Mr. Spurgeon this week, by a statement he made regarding those who spend most of their time trying to resolve the deep and mysterious theological questions. He said, “There is the puzzling problem concerning the origin of evil. I am not so much concerned about how evil came into the world as about helping to get it

out! Common sense seems to say that if there is a thief in the house, let us catch him, deal with him, and get him out. After that we will try to find out how he got in! Our Lord did not come into the world to tell us where sin came from, but by the sacrifice of himself to put it away.”

True Faith

True faith is built upon the strongest evidence possible--the word of God! True faith is a total dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ for all our needs; such as forgiveness, sanctification, peace, and eternal life. The believer renounces all confidence in his flesh, rejoices only in Christ Jesus, and worships God in spirit. He feeds upon Christ as the Bread of Life, embraces Christ as his wedding garment, derives all strength and comfort from Christ, and trusts himself to the care of Christ as his shepherd, teacher, priest, and king. This is the life of faith.

Who Then Can Be Saved?

Who then can be saved? Our Lord replied, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Matthew 19:25-26

The disciples asked this question. The first real difficulty in conversion is for a person to realize that he is a lost sinner. There are plenty of weak people, even sinful people; but only the Holy Spirit can produce a lost sinner who will cry, “O God, be merciful to me, the sinner.”

The second difficulty in conversion is to teach that sinner the gospel of Christ. He must be taught of God (Jn. 6:44-45) that Christ's blood and righteousness enable God to be just and justify those who believe. The gospel of free grace and mercy comes to the helpless sinner without any return on his part. Salvation, eternal life, is the gift of God. Even our repentance, faith, works of faith, and labors of love are produced by his presence in us, not by any merit on our part.

The third difficulty in conversion is to bring a believing sinner to rest all his days in the same love and grace that begat him. “As we have received Christ, we walk and rest in him.” We are chosen, called, and kept by his free grace.

“A sweet resting place is Jesus Christ to me,
The fullness of grace, sovereign, rich, and free.”

If We Want to Honor Christ

The Holy Spirit does not reach after something novel, new, nor spectacular in order to glorify Christ or to preach Christ to men. He does not need tongues, fleshly emotion, bodily healings, and creature fame and importance in order to bring glory to Christ and call out his sheep. He finds Christ's glory in Christ himself! If we want to honor Christ, glorify Christ, and preach Christ, we must not look for something outside of Christ; but we must honor him by preaching that which is his already; his deity, his person, his manhood, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his intercession and his return!

A Prayer for The New Year

May the Lord bless you and lift up the light of his countenance upon you and your family and give you peace. May you, during the next year, receive much grace and wisdom to walk in the fellowship of our Lord. May we, as a church, strive together to preach the gospel of our Redeemer here at home and wherever our Lord is pleased to open a door for us. May we walk in love, as Christ has loved us, and endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. May the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, the grace of our heavenly Father, and the fellowship of the blessed Spirit be yours. Now, beloved, in the highest and best sense, I wish you a happy new year!

Our Iniquity Is Gone, All Gone at Once

Can you imagine a person entering heaven without a new heart, without a love for Christ, unable to give Christ all glory and preeminence? He comes within the gates and hears a song of praise, "Worthy is the Lamb;" but he cannot join the song, for he knows not the tune nor the Lamb. He sees a throne and on it One who is glorious beyond words; but it is Christ, whom on earth he refused to worship and acknowledge as King of kings and Lord of lords. He sees a host of angels and an innumerable company of saints, all rejoicing in the grace and mercy of the beloved and glad to honor the Son. He stands motionless, silent and still, for he knows not the Son nor his glory! His dark, dirty rags of vain self-righteousness appear even darker before their white robes. There are no palms of victory in his hand nor crown of righteousness on his head; and he hears a voice louder

than ten thousand thunders, “What doest thou here? How camest thou hither not having a wedding garment?” Speechless, they cast him away! The blood of Jesus Christ is as blessed and divine a payment for the transgressions of blaspheming Peter as for the shortcomings of loving John. Our iniquity is gone, all gone at once, and all gone forever. Blessed completeness! What a sweet theme to dwell upon as one gives himself to sleep.

What Persuasion Are You?

A man was asked, “And what is your religious persuasion?” He replied, “I am persuaded that nothing can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 1999

They Shall Never Perish

*And I will give unto them eternal life; and they shall never
perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.*

John 10:28

Our Lord gives us spiritual life that never ends. He gives us himself, who is life. He gives us his righteousness which entitles us to life. He gives us the earnest or pledge of life, which is his Spirit. This life is hid with Christ in God and is sure, certain, and secure.

1. What kind of head is Christ if the body perish?
2. What kind of shepherd is Christ if his sheep perish?
3. What kind of husband is Christ if he allows his bride to perish?
4. What kind of priest is Christ if his atonement fails?
5. What kind of physician is Christ if the patient dies?
6. What kind of king is Christ if he has no subjects?

Joseph Hart wrote:

“If ever it could come to pass
That sheep of Christ might fall away,
My fickle, feeble soul, alas!,
Would fall a thousand times a day;
I on thy promises depend,
That thou will love me to the end.”

Our God Reigns

The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handy work.

Psalm 19:1

During the French revolution, Jean Bon Andre said to a minister, “I will pull down all of your churches, your steeples, your places of worship that you may no longer have any object to remind you of your religious superstitions.” “But,” replied the minister, “You cannot pull down the sun, the moon, and the stars; these all declare the glory of God. If every house of prayer be destroyed, if every preacher be forced to keep silent, if every choir be still and no human voice again pronounce the name of God, the heavens above will forever declare his glory; the birds will sing his praise and the wind and waves will say, ‘Our God reigns!’”

Constraining Love

For the love of Christ constraineth us

2 Corinthians 5:14

Before the Apostle Peter was sent to preach, to face an unfriendly world, to lead preachers and other believers, to suffer imprisonment, abuse, and trouble, and to face death for the sake of Christ and the gospel, our Lord settled a vital issue between himself and this disciple. “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” indicating the boats, the nets, the sea, and Simon's late interest, vocation, and former occupation and companions. “Do you love me?” and “Do you love me more than you love these?” Our Lord did not require Simon not to love and enjoy the sea and fishing, and not to love his family, but to love him more than these! “He that loveth (even) father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37).

There is absolutely nothing that can equip us, motivate us, sustain us, nor comfort us in our walk and ministry except his love for us and our love for him. Faithful pastors and missionaries remain in places of labor because they love Christ more than these!

Washed, Sanctified, and Justified

Paul wrote, “Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:10-11).

“Ye souls redeemed by Jesus' blood,
Salvation's theme pursue;
Exalt the sovereign grace of God,
For “such were some of you.”

From head to foot defiled by sin,
Deep in rebellion too,
This awful state mankind are in,
“And such were some of you.”

While they are sinners dead to God,
Ye highly favored few
Are washed from sin in his own blood;
For ‘such were some of you.’” --By Pastor Kent

Gracious to Others

When we see the great grace that God has shown to us, we will be gracious to others. If we know something of what he has forgiven us, we will find no difficulty in forgiving others. And if we learn that God has loved us without any merit nor cause on our part (loved the unlovable, one who hated him), we shall be able to love others even as he has loved us for Christ's sake. The one who cannot do these things has never really seen himself.

A Word to Those Who Preach

My brethren, what is our relation to this church? What is our position in it? We are servants! May we always know our place and keep it! The highest place in the church will always come to the man who willingly chooses the lowest; while he that aspires to be great among his brethren will sink to be least of all. Certain men might have been something if they had not thought themselves so. A consciously great man is an evidently

little one. A lord over God's heritage is a base usurper. He that in his heart and soul is always ready to serve the very least of the family, who expects to be put upon, and who willingly sacrifices reputation and friendship for Christ's sake, he shall fulfil a heaven-sent ministry. We are not sent to be ministered unto, but to minister. Let us sing unto our Well-Beloved.

To Whom Shall We Go?

Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

John 6:69

Shall we turn to the law? Nothing there but a curse. Shall we turn to the religious denominations and tradition? Nothing there but dead works and superstition. Shall we turn to our own wisdom and righteousness? Nothing there but foolishness and filthy rags! "Thou hast the words of eternal life!" He has the word of life. He is the word of life himself. He gives life eternal by his word. He came to restore the life we lost in the fall. "I passed by thee. I saw thee polluted in thy blood and I said live!" He quickens whom he will.

We Believe and Are Sure That Thou Art That Christ

Notice the order here. Natural men demand to be sure before they believe. God reverses that order. It is impossible to be sure or to have assurance until we believe him. "If you would believe, you would see the glory of God" (John 11:40). All things are possible to him that believes.

Accepted in The Beloved

There is nothing about us nor of us that would gain the respect or favor of God; for we are all as an "unclean thing and even our righteousnesses are filthy rags." On the other hand, neither what we are nor what we have hinders us from being accepted of God if he sets his love in Christ upon us. "Accepted in the Beloved" is both the hope and the plea of any sinner, regardless of his heritage or state.

Peace Without Truth

Peace without truth is a false peace! Unity without the gospel of Christ is a worthless unity. Let us never be ensnared by those who advocate a peace and unity without Christ's righteousness and atoning blood. There was no one who loved peace and unity more than the Apostle Paul; yet when he saw the Apostle Peter act contrary to redemption by grace (Gal 2:11), Paul withstood him to his face and publicly rebuked him. We dare not sacrifice our peace with God, in Christ, for the sake of a peaceful co-existence with this religious world. We dare not lose that blessed "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" in order to live without controversy among men. Let us remember the words of our Master, "Do not think that I come to bring peace on earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34).

Driveled to An Ambassador

I am sure that I can sympathize with William Carey when he said of his son, Felix, who left his missionary ministry to become an ambassador for the Queen of England, "Felix has driveled into an ambassador;" meaning to say that he was once a great person as a missionary of the gospel of God's grace, but now he has accepted a comparatively insignificant office. If a man forsakes his spiritual work because he finds there is so much else to do, he, too, drivels into something less than what he was before. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

Water Walk

Are we in the last days of the last days? The state of religion today indicates that we are. Note the following article from the newspaper *USA Today*.

"Water Walk; Israel's National Parks Authority announced plans Monday (Jan. 25, 1999) to build a submerged bridge in the Sea of Galilee that would allow tourists to simulate Jesus' miraculous walk on water. The Associated Press says a 13-foot-wide floating bridge will be hidden just below the water surface. It is one of many Israeli projects for the millennium when four million pilgrims are expected to visit Israel."

Conversion

“Peter, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). Many people use the term “converted” to mean regeneration. But regeneration is God's act alone and does not involve any work on our part. Regeneration is the implantation of life; conversion is the exercise of that life and its principles. Regeneration is a single act, complete in itself and never repeated; conversion, as the beginning of godly living, is a constant, progressive, and continuous growth in grace and the knowledge of Christ. Regeneration is a change from death to life; conversion is a change in attitude, spirit, and conduct.

Him

S. D. Gordon tells of an old Christian woman whose age began to tell on her memory. She had once known much of the Bible by heart. Eventually only one precious bit stayed with her; “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” By and by part of that slipped its hold, and she would quietly repeat, “That which I have committed unto him.” As she slipped away, her children noticed her lips moving, and they bent over to hear. She was repeating one word, “him...him...him.” She had lost the whole Bible but one word. But she had the whole Bible in that one word. “The Lord knoweth them that are his.”

Let Us Read This Article Again!

If we could peer into heaven and see that great number of departed and glorified saints, I think we would see Abraham and his nephew Lot, Joshua and Rehab the harlot, Samuel and Samson, the penitent thief, and the glorious Apostle Paul, all dressed in the very same raiment; that beautiful garment of salvation, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ which was freely given them (Isa. 61:10). After all, nothing less will make a sinner acceptable in God's sight and qualified for heaven! And what is there more? Can anything be added to the righteousness of Christ? Can anything make a sinner more approved of God? The Lord Jesus Christ is all of the believer's justifying righteousness (1 Cor.1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Gospel Hardened

Harden not your hearts.

Hebrews 3:8

There is a natural hardness of heart with which we all are born. The heart of all natural sons of Adam is like a stone; destitute of life.

There is an acquired, voluntary hardness of heart to which men arrive by mocking the word of God and ignoring the warnings and words brought by God's, servants. Pharaoh is a good example. "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice;" and so, "Pharaoh hardened his heart and hearkened not to Moses."

There is a hardness of heart (referred to here) to which people are liable who claim to be God's people (as Israel did), who give mental acceptance to the word, who often hear the word preached and go about the outward forms of worship and religion, "Who try me, prove me, and see my works, yet err in heart and do not know nor walk in my ways" (Heb. 3:9-10). The old-timers called it "gospel-hardened." Heart and hand, faith and walk, thoughts and ways; these are to be attended to now, while it is called today.

The Firstfruits Of Them That Slept

1 Corinthians 15:20

Why is our Lord called, "the firstfruits of them that slept"? Because as the whole harvest of fruits or vegetables follows the first-fruits, so shall the general resurrection of all believers to life eternal follow the resurrection of their Lord from the dead. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies" (Rom. 8:10-11). Though our bodies must die, as well as other men, because of sin, yet our bodies shall live again in the resurrection because of the Spirit of Christ who lives in us.

If It Is Not True

Is it true that God became a man to redeem us? If it is true, then we have a righteousness, an atonement, a Mediator, and a hope of eternal life! If it is not true, if there is no man in glory called the Lord Jesus Christ, then no

man will ever be in glory and we all stand condemned before God with no Mediator.

Isaac – Type of Our Lord Jesus

1. In his birth and the circumstances.
 - a. Both births announced by angels.
 - b. Both births long awaited.
 - c. Both beyond ordinary course of nature.
 - d. Both were the seed of Abraham.
2. Isaac was his father's heir, as is Christ.
3. Isaac carried the wood on which he was laid.
4. Isaac was offered on a mountain by his father.
5. Isaac did not die, but the ram died. The Lord did not die, but Jesus the Lamb died.
6. Isaac was delivered on the third day.
7. After this mountain experience, Isaac returned to his father's house, as did the Lord Jesus.

Good Works

No man by nature is fit nor capable of good works! Someone wrote this definition of a good work. “A good work is done in obedience to God's command; in faith; from a principle of love only; in the name and power of the Lord Jesus; and only for the glory of God.” Is it any wonder Isaiah called our good works “filthy rags”?

What Manner of Man Is This?

All religious reformers and messiahs come to live; he came to die.

All others leave monuments and memorials; no one can find his birthplace, grave, nor one possession.

All others write diaries and memoirs; he wrote on the sand.

All others choose their followers from the rich; powerful, and influential; he chose the poor and needy.

All others praise human righteousness; he condemned it.

All others seek those who can help them; he sought those whom he could help.

All others promise success and happiness to their followers; he promised tribulation and suffering.

All others hold their disciples with fear and force; he invited his to leave him if they would.

All others have palaces, mansions, and headquarters; he had no place to lay his head.

All others reward the most talented with recognition, titles, and honor; he said, "The least shall be greatest."

All others say, "Follow me; I will show you the way; he said, "Come to me, I am the way."

All others claim to be messengers of God; he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen God!"

All others stay dead; he arose; and all of his claims, works, and promises are true because God raised him from the dead.

A Poor Sermon

Many years ago, a young man delivered a sermon in a Welch chapel. After he finished the sermon, he remarked to an old gentleman, "What did you think of my sermon? My friend, it took me a long time to prepare it." "I'm sure that it did," said the old man, "but it was still a poor sermon." "Was my delivery poor, or were my illustrations poorly applied?" "Oh no," said the old man, "your delivery was excellent, and your arguments and illustrations were very good." "Then why do you say that I preached a very poor sermon?" The old man paused and slowly said, "There was no Christ in your sermon." The young man replied, "Christ was not in the text; we must preach what is in the text." "My young friend, in every text there is a road to Christ. Your business, as a minister of the gospel, is to find that road which leads to Christ and get on it as quickly as you can! For no sermon will do a sinner good if it does not lead him to Christ. The best sermon is that sermon which is fullest of Christ."

I believe that every sermon we preach should contain The Three R's--*Ruin* by the fall, *redemption* by the blood of Christ, and *regeneration* by the Holy Spirit. If our hearers learn these in their hearts, they will not go far wrong on other matters; but if they have not learned these, it will matter very little what else they learn. They will be like those who are, "Ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth."

Gladness

I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.

Psalm 122:1

1. I am glad that I have a place of worship, a house of the Lord to which I may go.
2. I am glad that I have a pastor and elders who are called of God to preach the true word of God to me.
3. I am glad God has given me a desire to go to the house of the Lord to praise, pray, and worship.
4. I am glad I am not alone in this desire to go to his house. I have many brothers and sisters who rejoice to meet me there and exalt the name of the Lord.
5. I am glad for his promise that when we meet together in his house, he will be in our midst.

Just A Greeting Card

In the morning mail there was a different shaped envelope, not like your standard letter but with the name and address properly written. Inside was a brightly colored card which said something like, "Happy Birthday. May this and all of your future days be blessed with the mercies and love of our God." But to me that little greeting card said much more! Its message went far beyond its printed words and entitled that card to be received and handled with special attention.

1. That card says that someone thinks of you even when you are not with them.
2. That card says someone loves you and cares enough about you to give you a part of his day: enough to go to a store, look through cards, and find one that will convey his thoughts and best wishes to you; enough to sit down, address it, and carry it to the mailbox.
3. That card says that you have a friend. You are not alone. You are appreciated for who you are and what you have done.
4. That card carries with it a wish, a desire, or prayer for your well-being and prosperity in soul and body.

My conclusion: never treat a card, a note, or a letter with anything but the tenderest of care and respond as soon as you can; for it brings to you a part of the sender.

What Can Stir Us Up to Praise the Lord?

What can a believer do to stir up divine praise and never take for granted the mercy and grace of God? I suggest four things.

1. Bear in mind always that all that we are, have, and hope to be comes from our Lord. “A man can receive nothing except it be given him from God.” “The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.” “I am what I am by the grace of God.”

2. Realize the value of “our heavenly blessings” as opposed to the emptiness of material possessions. “What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?” The whole world is not equal in value to one man's soul!

3. Keep a true understanding of your unworthiness and his goodness! Mephibosheth is a good spokesman for us all; “He bowed himself and said, what is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?”

4. In order to, “give thanks always” for all things unto God, we understand that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” The Lord's will and purpose is the good of the whole body of Christ (the church), not just the good of one person. What takes place in each life is for the salvation and ultimate good of all the family and for the glory of the Lord Jesus.

Will You Also Go Away?

John 6:67-68

Peter usually acted as spokesman for the other disciples, and he replied, “Lord, to whom shall we go?” Shall we turn to the law? Nothing there but a curse. Shall we turn to the Pharisees and organized religion? Nothing there but ceremony and dead works. Shall we turn to our own wisdom and thoughts? Nothing there but foolishness and the way of death. “Thou hast the words of eternal life.” He is the word of life and his word gives life. “We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ.” Notice the order here! Natural men demand to be sure before they believe. God reverses man's order. It is impossible to be sure or to have assurance or confidence in

Christ until we believe! We believe; and because God has given us faith, he has also given us the spirit of assurance. “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom (though now ye see him not) yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8).

If Any Man Thirst, Let Him Come to me

John 7:37-38

The last day of the feast arrived. It is called “that great day of the feast” because on the closing day there was a general and solemn gathering of worshippers (Lev. 23:36). On this day, when the temple courts were thronged with a large crowd, our Lord stood and cried with aloud voice, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” Three words stand out and demand our attention.

“*Thirst.*” This is a spiritual thirst (Jn. 4: 13-14), a strong desire for forgiveness, for righteousness, for a knowledge of God and acceptance by him. This is a man longing for the living God (Psalm 42:1; Matt. 5:6).

“*Come to me;*” not to Moses and the law, not to works and ceremonies, not to religious leaders and organizations, but to him! To come to him is to believe on him, to receive him, and to trust in him (2 Tim. 1:12).

“*Drink;*” that is, to take the water of life freely or to take of his grace freely. Salvation by Christ is of free grace, and justification is freely by his grace. We have but to come to him and drink. There is a fullness of grace in Christ. His grace is sufficient and abundant for all (Col. 2:9-10). “All the fitness he requireth is to feel your need of him.” The fountain of life flows abundantly and freely; all the sinner need do is drink.

The Treasure in Earthen Vessels

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

“The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ Jesus” is called a treasure because it is rich truth which sets men free; it has rich blessings such as wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; it contains rich and precious promises; it brings to us the riches of his grace in Christ.

This treasure “in earthen vessels,” meaning the ministers to whom God entrusts this gospel and through whom he sends the gospel to his sheep. These ministers are God's men; but they are still men, weak and frail, subject to like passions and infirmities, “that the excellency of the

power may be of God and not of us.” Whatever is accomplished in the proclamation of the gospel by these men is the result of God's purpose and work, certainly not of us. Paul wrote in 1 Cor.15:10, “I have labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it were I or they, so we preach and so ye believe.” Let not one grain of faith be in the wisdom of any man, but in the wisdom and power of God; which is Christ!

Be Not a Worldling

Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Romans 12:2

The word “world” means the nature, the opinions, the goals, and the attitudes of natural men and women. The believer lives in the world, works and associates with worldly people; therefore, he faces constant pressure and temptation to be and do what the world is and does.

The world seeks the praise and favor of men; the believer seeks the praise and favor of God. The worldling thinks only of himself; the believer considers others. The world cares only for the body, its desires and needs; the believer is concerned for his soul. The world believes and is concerned only with what is seen (which is temporal); the believer believes and rests only in that which is unseen (which is eternal). The world cries, “What shall we eat, drink, and wear;” the believer cries, “Feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal and take the name of the Lord in vain” (Prov. 30:9). But above all, “That I may win Christ and be found in him, clothed in his righteousness and washed in his blood.” The spiritual walk and attitude can only be accomplished by “a renewing of your mind,” or the regenerating work of God in mind and soul (Titus 3:5).

A Piece of Brass

Hezekiah removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for in those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: he called it a piece of brass.

2 Kings 18:4

I am confident that the religious, superstitious Israelites were horrified when King Hezekiah destroyed their sacred symbol (which they worshipped, the serpent of brass Moses had made) calling it “a (worthless) piece of brass.” Hezekiah declared it to be of no value in the worship of God, but rather a hindrance to the worship.

I can understand a person's interest in that brazen serpent. It would be extremely interesting to see it. It would be interesting to see the rod of Moses, the tables of the law, the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, and the cross on which our Lord died! But interesting is all that these things can be--certainly not inspirational, nor edifying, nor of any spiritual value, nor of any consequence where our relationship with God is concerned. These are but types, pictures, and things which the Lord used to point our faith, hope, and trust to Christ Jesus! In the knowledge, love, and worship of God, “Christ is all!”

Hezekiah shocked Israel when he called Moses' serpent “a piece of brass.” We may shock religion today by calling the cross on which Christ died “a piece of wood,” or the tomb in which he laid, “a hole in the ground,” or the winding sheet in which he was wrapped, “a piece of cloth,” but, having served their purpose, that's all that they are. And to make them of any spiritual significance is to be in danger of idolatry! Idolatry is a subtle tool of Satan and must be avoided. “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.” True believers have no superstitions regarding days, hallowed places on earth, religious relics, symbols, signs, nor ancestors. Christ is our Sabbath, our altar, our prophet, priest, and king. To him and only to him we come, bow, believe, and worship.

Sink or Swim

When the seeking sinner sees sin in its true light (heinous), when he sees the world as it is (vanity), when he sees Christ in his redemptive glory (eternal joy), he will be done with talking, reasoning, rationalizing, and

theorizing; and he will flee to Christ. An old writer said, “Sink or swim, I go to him.”

Christ Himself

Our natural life is but a continual dying. As the Son of God, Christ has the fullness of life in himself; and as Redeemer and Mediator, he is the fountain of life for all who come to him by faith.

Truth Is Usually in The Minority

We believe that the work of regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and faith is not an act of man's free will and power, but of the mighty, efficacious, and irresistible grace of God! John Anderson wrote of Spurgeon, “He preaches salvation, not of man's free will, but of the Lord's good will, which few in London now do!” I suppose that this could be said of us today, but truth is usually in the minority in this world. As one of the Lord's preachers once said, “Long ago, I ceased to count people. I thank God, what I believe and preach, I shall believe and preach, even if I believe it alone!”

Preach the Person and Work of Christ

The best way to expose a false god is to preach the true and living God! If half the time men have spent in argument, debate, and counsels to offset heresy had been used to preach the person and work of our great, sovereign Redeemer, we would be much better for it!

God's Prophet

I have often thought that the way that God dealt with Moses might just be the way he deals with every called servant. Moses wanted to be God's leader; but when he was finally made ready to be God's prophet, he did not want the job! Moses believed God had raised him up to deliver Israel from Egypt. He was a strong, educated, popular man; and when he saw the Egyptian smiting the Israelite, he assumed that the time had come for him to act. Moses had many natural gifts; but he needed patience, wisdom, humility, and grace; God's gifts, to do God's work. Gadsby said, “God sent Moses forty years to college in the desert to qualify him for the ministry of

God. After Moses had been forty years in the wilderness, he did not volunteer so quickly nor so zealously.” It was a different Moses who said, “Lord, send by whom thou wilt, but I am slow of speech; I am not eloquent.” He did not talk this way forty years earlier. He was anxious to be a prophet of God; but now that the Lord has equipped and qualified him to serve him, he shrinks back and does not want the job. He is like Paul who cries, “Who is sufficient for these things?”

His Intercession

When we learn the sinfulness of our best deeds and the evil in our best works, we will see the glory of his intercession!

Walking in Him

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

Colossians 2:6

Walking is action and movement, so walking in Christ involves “works of faith and labor of love.” Walking is making progress from grace to grace, from one degree of faith to another. Walking in Christ means to possess the life of Christ, “For in him we live and move and have our being.” Walking in Christ is seeking his will, his way, his glory, not mine! “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not, for God took him.” When Enoch was called to go home, he had no great changes to make nor situations to alter; he was already walking in that direction, with Christ.

The Prodigal's Brother

In the parable of the prodigal son, as told by our Lord, there are two lost sons, not just one! The prodigal was flagrantly wicked, ungrateful, a reckless run-away, lost through hot passion and wild living. He asked for his inheritance from his father because he did not want to wait for it. The other son was morally obedient and well-pleased with himself, even to the point of boasting of his works and obedience to his father. Yet he was as truly spiritually dead and lost as his wayward brother. While the younger son's sinful nature took him down the path of lust and drunkenness to the

hog pen, the evil nature of the elder son led him to walk in pride, self-righteousness, and envy to the temple of the Pharisees to worship the god of human merit and free-will. How base and ungodly both of these sons! Which is in the most danger of eternal condemnation? Which will most likely repent and sue for mercy? Neither, if left to themselves; but we observe which of the lost sons God, was pleased to save!

“Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of him!”

A Four-Fold Defense Against Falling

Jude 20-21

Jude shows how believers can overcome the devices of Satan and avoid being influenced by false teachers.

1. “Build yourselves up on your most holy faith.” We know that Christ Jesus is the object of faith, but the word of God is the foundation of faith. By the word faith is born; by the word faith is assured, comforted, and tried; and by the word faith grows and is strengthened. “Desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby.” Our Lord answered every temptation of Satan with the scriptures; you and I must have that same weapon.

2. “Pray in the Holy Ghost.” Our Lord said (Luke 18:1), “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (lose heart and give up). And those who pray do not quit nor lose heart because the Lord hears their cry and sustains them and strengthens them. “Ye have not because ye ask not.” “Ask and you shall receive.” “Brethren,” Paul said, “pray for us;” and pray about all things!

3. “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” “All the law is fulfilled in one word, love” (Gal. 5:14). We are saved because God loves us in Christ. “He loved us and gave his Son a propitiation.” Set this before you, keep it in view, and draw strength from it. Secondly, the evidence that a work of grace is done in us is that we love him; and our walk, obedience, and service are motivated by love for God. Thirdly, our relationship with others will be determined by this principle; “If he so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

4. “Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” His mercies past; he chose us, redeemed and called us. His mercies present; he intercedes, comforts, and provides all our needs. His mercies future; “He will keep you from falling and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” This is the believer's sure defense against the wiles of Satan and the errors of false religion.

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 2000

Accept or Receive

We do not read in the scriptures anywhere that the blind “accepted” their sight; the blind received their sight, the lame walk, and the lepers are cleansed (Matthew 11:5).

Gain the World and Lose his Soul

Naaman came to the Lord and lost his leprosy. Gehazi coveted Naaman's position, possessions, and place in the world, and with it gained his leprosy (2 Kings 5:27). Always, he who gains the world also loses his soul!

“Tis only Christ can give
Sweetest pleasure while we live;
'Tis only Christ can supply
Solid comfort when we die.”

Pride and Arrogance

A man who understands what really happened in the Garden of Eden and on the cross of Calvary will have no problem with pride and arrogance.

I Am a Jehovah Witness

The Jehovah Witnesses visited Pastor Paul Mahan recently. Upon determining who they were, he asked, “Do you know the meaning of or who Jehovah-Tsid Kenu is?” They replied, “No!” He asked, “Then are you familiar with Jehovah-Jireh?” Again, their reply came, “No!” “How about Jehovah-Shalom and Jehovah-Nissa?” The answer was always “No!” Pastor Mahan said, “Then *you* are not witnesses of Jehovah; *I* am a

Jehovah witness!” Strange how men will take to themselves religious titles, names, and slogans and not have the slightest understanding of them! Thank God, “The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

Motive for Love

It is not wrong to love God for what he has done for us! Not to do so would be ingratitude. David's love for the Lord showed itself in not forgetting all his benefits (Psa. 110). “He forgives our iniquities, heals our spiritual diseases, redeems our lives, crowns us with lovingkindness and tender mercies, and satisfies our mouths with good things.” Some theologians tell us that the highest kind of love is to love God for what he is rather than for what he has done in us and for us. Someday I may be able to identify with this highest kind of love; but until then, “I love him because he loved me and sent his Son to be the propitiation for my sins.”

The Word of God

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee...then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

Proverbs 2:1, 5

Search the word; study the word; weigh the words of all preachers by the word of God. We must make a difference between God's word and the words of men. “Man's words are a sound which flies into the air and soon vanishes.” But the word of God is eternal; it is greater than heaven and earth; it is greater than life or death; for it is the power and wisdom of God! It is “with the word of truth” that he begets us. It is “through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth that God has chosen us to salvation” (2 Thess. 2:13). It is “by hearing the word” that faith comes. “Comfort one another with these words,” saith the Lord. If there is any one thing that would please God's true preachers, it is that our hearers would “receive the word of God with all readiness of mind and search the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). Honor the words of God and honor the Lord's Spirit, who gave them, by trusting him

to give you light and understanding. We preach and teach, but only our Lord can enlighten the hearts of men.

Think on These Things

Philippians 4:7-8

“The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” This peace of heart and mind arises from a correct understanding of God's mercy in Christ, our sins are forgiven, all that takes place in our lives is for our eternal good, and we shall live and reign with Christ forever. “Think on these things.”

Do not allow the world to clutter your mind and heart (via newspapers, magazines, television, internet) with its ways, thoughts, music, philosophy, and covetousness. A constant diet of and bombardment from these sources will trouble you and drive the peace and joy of grace from you. But rather...

Whatsoever things are true to Christ and his word.

Whatsoever things are honest in the sight of God and men, honest in business and conduct.

Whatsoever things are just, giving to God his honor, and praise to man that which is his due.

Whatsoever things are pure in word and deed, godly in thought and motive.

Whatsoever things are holy, agreeable to the character of God and his kingdom, which promotes holiness in character and conduct.

Whatsoever things are lovely, things which are kind, compassionate, generous and helpful to others.

Whatsoever things are of good report, things which we hear that contribute to a good name, a good reputation, a good opinion, and promote the glory of Jesus Christ.

Think on these things! Discuss these things with others! Let your minds and hearts dwell on these things; and doing so, that peace of Christ and rest in his grace and mercy will grow.

“Thou will keep him in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on thee;
When the shadows come and darkness falls,
He giveth inward peace.”

Fetching Grace

When King David determined to adopt Mephibosheth as his own son, restore, unto him all that he had lost in his father, and allow him to sit at the King's table, he did not send a message inviting Mephibosheth to come to him. The scripture says, “Then King David sent and *fetch*ed him” (2 Sam.9:5). David sent his servant with a command to come; and, Mephibosheth being a cripple, David sent his carriage to convey him to the palace. “The command and the carriage go together,” says one long ago.

Much more is this true of God and his gospel. His word and his Spirit go together when he determined to save his sheep. “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (the word).” The command to believe and the will to believe go together! No blind and lame Mephibosheth is commanded nor expected to arise and come to Christ apart from the Spirit's power to do so! “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power” (Psalm 110).

Be angry, Sin Not

Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath.

Ephesians 4:26

There is an anger which is not sinful, for anger is found in God and in our Saviour. It arises from a true zeal for God and for holiness, and it is not against persons but against sins. But do not allow even this anger to continue; let it be over when the day is over. All anger and indignation should quickly be forgotten (James 1:19-20).

Look to Christ To Keep You

An old preacher addressed a few believers who had confessed the Lord in baptism and said to them, “My dear brethren, you have today professedly

put on the Lord Jesus Christ. God help you to be circumspect in your walk and conversation. The church will watch you, the world will watch you, your doubting friends will watch you, enemies of the truth will watch you. God help you to watch yourselves, to look to him to keep you, to support you, and to succor you.”

July 18, 1680

Three days before he was killed at Airsmoss because of the gospel he preached, Pastor Richard Cameron preached from Psalm 46 and made this statement: “Be still and know that I am God.” This text forbids us to quarrel or murmur against God. All of us need to be afraid of this. Beware of it; for it is a dreadful thing to find fault with God's dealings with us or to say unto him, 'What doest Thou?' It is a good account of Aaron that when God destroyed his sons, Aaron held his peace. Let us then (while we bear the yoke) sit still and keep silence and put our mouth in the dust. God gives no account of his matters to anyone. There are so many things we cannot see through nor understand; but “the Lord is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

The Word Made Flesh

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

My friends, if you will carefully consider it, this is the most extraordinary fact ever declared in human language. God became a man and “took upon him the likeness of sinful flesh.” The Ancient of Days became an infant of days. The Son of the Most High God became a man of sorrows. He made the world; but as a man, “He had no place to lay his head.” He who made the rivers asked a woman to give him a drink of water. He who cast out devils was tempted of the devil, and the author of life died and lay in a tomb.

Listen to the poet:

“His fingers formed the bough which grew
the thorns that crowned his brow;
The nails which pierced his hands were mined
in secret places he designed;
He made the forest whence there sprung
the tree on which his body hung;
He died on a cross of wood,
yet he made the hill on which it stood;

The sun that hid from him its face
by his own hand was hung in space;
The sky which darkened o'er his head
by him above the world was spread;
The spear that shed his precious blood
was tempered in the fires of God;
The grave in which his form was laid
was hewn in rocks his hand had made.”

It Is A Fact

When, by his grace, I know *who* he is, I better understand who and what I am!

When I know *what* he did in obedience and death, I realize what I cannot do!

When I understand *why* he must suffer, I understand how God can be just and justify me.

When I know *where* he is, I can rest in the blessed hope that I shall one day be there too!

Saving Faith Always Accompanied by Saving Graces

The same gospel of the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ, which saves sinners, also sanctifies them and makes them obedient sons. A faith which does not produce obedience to God's word and godliness of character is not saving faith at all.

Spurgeon once said, “There was no need for special conventions and camp meetings on “sanctification and holiness” until preachers left the

gospel of sovereign grace, and the Arminian message and methods prevailed in evangelism.” The Westminster Confession teaches, “Faith is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces.”

The Calvinistic message of God's electing love in Christ Jesus has produced generations of serious, God-fearing and persevering, obedient lovers of Christ and one another; for it is by that love for Christ, his word, and his people that we know that we have “passed from death unto life,” and by which we make “our calling and election sure.”

An Appropriate Tribute for So Many

Joseph Harrald was one of Pastor Charles Spurgeon's most faithful friends, trusted brother, and secretary. On several occasions he occupied Spurgeon's pulpit in his absence, carefully edited his sermons for publication, and to him was given the responsibility to further Spurgeon's ministry after his death, and to help Spurgeon's widow. In tribute to this mostly unknown laborer, Harwood Field wrote: “He was always behind the curtain, as it were. He did the work, yet he had no recognition for it. Only our Lord, who sees in secret, could know and estimate the valuable service of this most devoted laborer in the harvest field.”

Sectarianism

Someone once wrote: “I glory in that which at the present day is so much spoken against, sectarianism! I find it applied to all Christians who believe the word of God. If a man be in earnest and sincerely holds to the truth of the word of God, he is called a sectarian, a bigot, and worse. Let me tell you, when we cease, each of us, to hold to the old paths, to maintain our views of truth, and to maintain those truths firmly and strenuously, then truth shall fly out of the land and error alone shall reign! Success to sectarianism! May it live and flourish!”

Definite and Effectual Atonement

What a person believes that our Lord Jesus actually accomplished at Calvary will determine (in that person's mind) for whom Christ suffered and died! The Scriptures say, “He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;” “By himself he purged our sins;” “We are sanctified through the

offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;” “The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin;” “By his stripes we are healed.”

Our Lord did not die to make salvation possible for all; but he died, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; and he shall certainly do just that!

“The Saviour's blood is all we plead,
And all that guilty sinners need.”

Jacob Have I Loved, But Esau Have I Hated

You will sometimes hear those who deny the wrath of God and preach the universal love of God for all men declare that what this verse in Romans 9:13 really says is, “God loves Jacob and he loves Esau LESS.” Now, I ask you, how does our infinite, Almighty, perfect God do anything less than perfectly? Is he at times less righteous? Less holy? Less just?

Our comfort in Christ is that he who loves his sheep has always loved them, will always love them, and loves them as he loves Christ Jesus, his only begotten Son (John 17:23). And to those who were told to depart from his presence, he said, “I never knew you.” Malachi 3:6 declares, “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” Our comfort is that his love in Christ is without degrees or changes, as is his wrath upon those outside of the Ark, Christ Jesus!

The Oneness of All Believers

“That they all may be one: as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us” (John 17:21). I know that there is a oneness between the Father and the Son in nature, essence, power, and purpose which transcends any kind of union among men. But our Lord prays that “all believers may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.” So here on this earth, we are one in faith. We all believe Christ, receive Christ, and agree in the main point of the gospel; salvation only in, by, and through our Lord Jesus. We are one in affection. He is our first love; but, by his grace, we do love one another and are forever knit together in that love. We have one common goal; the glory of our blessed Lord. In works of faith and labors of love, in trials or in prosperity, in giving or receiving our song is the same, “To God be the glory.” We have the same care one for another (1 Cor. 12:26), “And when one member of his body suffers, all

the members of the body suffer with it; or if one member of his body be honored (fulfilled and happy), all the members rejoice with it. “And by this shall all men know that you are my disciples!

Sinners Need A Miracle

If a man is near-sighted, he only needs corrective glasses; but if he is blind, he needs a miracle only God can give, sight. If a man is sick, he only needs medicinal aid; but if he is dead, he needs a miracle only God can give life! If a man has a weak heart, perhaps changing his diet and habits will improve his condition; but if he has a stony heart, a deceitful, desperately wicked heart, he needs this miracle; “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezek.36:26-27).

Knowing these things to be true and knowing the desperate, depraved condition in which Adam's fall has plunged all mankind, I believe, preach, and insist upon one solemn certain fact; “Salvation is of the Lord.” Let every son of Adam who reads these words come (like the leper in Matt. 8) to Christ and worship him, saying, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole!” And he will!!

Constraining Love

For the love of Christ constraineth us

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

All ministers of Christ and all believers in the Lord Jesus are under the strongest and most compelling constraint to do what they do and live as they live. They are motivated by “The love of Christ;” his love for them and their love for him! It is not the fear of hell, nor a desire for special rewards, nor to establish a righteousness that they engage in worship, works of faith, and labors of love. It is Christ's eternal love, which led him to redeem them by his life and death, and the love of God for Christ and his church and kingdom which is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit. “All the law is fulfilled in one word—Love God and love one another” (Gal. 5:14). It is unreasonable to suggest that an unworthy sinner, loved with an everlasting love, chosen in Christ, redeemed by his blood, and called with a holy, heavenly calling, would disregard the

commandments of his Lord and live a selfish, self-centered, and worldly life! “For the love of Christ constraineth us...that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.”

Except Acorn of Wheat Fall into The Ground and Die

John 12:24

Consider ordinary farming. The grain of wheat must first be buried and lose its form before it springs up again and bears fruit. So it is with the Son of man. He must be crucified for sin, buried, and rise again that the law might be honored, the justice of God might be satisfied, and there might be a gospel of life. If he does not die (like the corn of wheat), he abides alone with no people, no fruit! Without his blood and death, there is no remission of sin. But his death will be productive of much fruit from every tribe, kindred, and nation.

So it is with those who would be disciples of Christ. If we hold to, protect, and shield this life from being crucified and buried with Christ, if we refuse to be identified with him in truth, suffering for the gospel even to death, we shall lose our souls. But if (like the farmer who in faith cast his wheat into the ground, believing in the future harvest) we cast our lives, hope, and future to Christ, with Christ, and for Christ (caring not for worldly security, comfort, nor praise), we shall live forever (2 Tim. 1:8-12).

And Now Why Tarriest Thou? Arise and Be Baptized!

There are people in our assemblies who have heard the gospel of Christ with the heart. They believe him, they love him, and they truly rest in him as Lord and Redeemer; but they have not confessed Christ in believer's baptism. The question is asked, “Why tarriest thou?” I believe I can answer for them.

1. They are troubled by the presence and strength of indwelling sin; “In my flesh dwelleth no good thing.”
2. They are shocked by the weakness of their faith.

3. They fear that they will fail and dishonor the Lord and embarrass the church.
4. They are waiting for greater assurance and more grace.
5. They are by nature very timid and shun public demonstrations.

But no such reasons are valid; for in baptism we are not confessing our holiness, but His; not our strength, but His; not our life, but His! “We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3).

Look to Christ

The command, “Look unto me and be ye saved,” is not only the hope and strength of the seeking sinner, but it is the constant hope and strength of the believing sinner. I know my sins, but I rejoice in his grace; I know my weakness, but I rest in his strength; I know my emptiness, but I am complete in him.

Faith That Works

Rowland Hill once said that when a man comes to know the Lord, even his dog and cat and farm animals will be the better for it. It was William Jay who wrote that a person, when he comes to Christ, will be better in every relationship. He is a better husband, master, worker, and friend than before else his religion is not genuine.

Charles Spurgeon once said, “Do you hear one saying, ‘keep my religion to myself?’ Well, friend, you do not have to worry about it being stolen. You do not have to put it under lock and key; there is not enough of it to even tempt Satan to take it from you. A man who can keep his godliness to himself has so small a portion, I am afraid it will be of no credit to him nor any blessing to anyone else.”

I ask three questions concerning our faith!

1. Does it cause us to pray, worship God and give thanks?
2. Does it cause us to seek his will, his word, and his way?
3. Does it cause us to, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us”?

Behold the Lamb of God

The Jews were looking for Messiah to come as a great prophet or a great king. They understood nothing of a “Saviour-Priest,” of a “Lamb of God.” You would think these priests and Levites who ministered about the temple and the sacrifices would have inquired about the sacrifice; but no, apparently they had no sense of sin; they were Abraham's seed. They would have welcomed him on the throne, but not on the altar. “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:29).

1. In Gen. 4:4 we have the Lamb typified.
2. In Gen. 22:8 we have the Lamb prophesied.
3. In Exo. 12:5-7 we have the Lamb slain and the blood applied.
4. In Isa. 53:1-7 we have the Lamb personified, a man.
5. In John 1:29 we have the Lamb identified.
6. In Rev. 5:6, 13 we have the Lamb magnified and glorified.

Words of Comfort

Our Lord has been pleased to call away to glory many of our dear, loved ones. No words of men can make these trials easier, dry your tears, nor dispel your loneliness. But perhaps I can remind us of some things that we know and believe, and these shall be to us words of comfort.

They are *with* Christ in glory. “To be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord,” and they would not come back to this earth even if they could.

They are *perfect* in soul and body! No more sin, no more pain, no more tears, no more sorrow! They are satisfied, for they are in his likeness; perfectly holy and happy.

They have no *unpleasant thought* nor memories of anyone nor anything on this earth. “The former things are passed away; for God makes all things new.” Don't grieve over any neglect, deed, nor word; it is forgotten in his presence.

They would *not have you grieve* for them, but rather rejoice in their graduation, promotion, and victory. “To die is gain” and eternal glory! Their trials and tribulations are over; soon ours shall be.

There is no *time* in glory! Days and years have to do with earth, not heaven. “With God a thousand years is a day.” My son did not go to glory thirty years ago; he went there today, and so shall we! Time is no more when we leave this earth.

They are gone for the *present*, and memories of them are sweet and shall be with us throughout this journey. Remember, we have a life to live ourselves, our God to glorify, our children and others to serve, love, and encourage. We cannot live in the past and spend our days complaining of God's providence. Paul said, "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Sons and daughters, take up your parents mantle and serve your generation faithfully.

Reasons for A Good Hope

The Apostle Peter wrote: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). In Rom. 8:31-35 you will find Paul's reasons for our hope of eternal life in the form of five questions.

1. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Can the law, justice, or Satan defeat the purpose of our God?

2. "If God spared not his own Son," but delivered him up for us all, shall he not with him also freely give us all things that Christ purchased by his death?

3. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" They are justified by God; the Almighty God and highest court!

4. "Who is he that condemneth?" It is Christ who died, and the fact that the Father raised him from the grave and exalted him to his right hand as our forerunner and head assures us of that place.

5. "Who can separate us from the love of God?" His love is an everlasting, unchangeable love in Christ!

Waiting on God

The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.

Lamentations 3:25

Do you suppose there could ever be found one who sincerely waited upon God, sought his mercy in Christ, and called upon him for mercy out of a broken and sincere heart who did not receive his grace? I say with Paul, "God forbid!" This could not be.

I sought the Lord, and then I knew it was he that sought me; I waited and found the Lord, and afterward I knew that it was he who found me. Yes, he is eternally good and gracious to all who seek him and call upon him; for in Christ he purposed so to be!

They Were Expendable

In World War II it was said of certain P.T. Boats and landing craft, “They were expendable.” The word “expendable” means, “Supplies or equipment expected to be used up or destroyed in service of a mission; equipment or men considered replaceable and therefore to be sacrificed to gain an objective or accomplish a purpose.”

Read that definition again and see if it does not apply to the prophets of the Old Testament and to the apostles of the New Testament who were all (except John) put to death in the cause of Christ and the gospel! Does it not apply to the faithful missionaries who have left their home and country to labor in the gospel and to God's servants (whomever and wherever) who are committed to his gospel, his glory, and his church and who care little for earthly possessions, worldly comforts, name recognition, and memorials?

“The expendables” know that they are expendable!

“The expendables” know for whose purpose and mission they are sacrificed!

“The expendables” count it an honor and privilege unsurpassed to be used of God wherever he pleases.

“The expendables” know that while they are expendable, replaceable, and to be sacrificed here on earth, in glory in Christ they are unexpendable, irreplaceable, and forever glorified!

The Oneness of All Believers

That they all may be one: as Thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.

John 17:21

I know that there is a oneness between the Father and the Son in nature, essence, power, and purpose which transcends any kind of union among men. But our Lord prays that “all believers may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.” So here on this earth;

We are one in *faith*. We all believe Christ, receive Christ, and agree in the main point of the gospel, salvation only in, by, and through our Lord Jesus;

We are one in *affection*. He is our first love; but, by his grace, we do love one another and are forever knit together in that love;

We have one common *goal*; the glory of our blessed Lord. In works of faith and labors of love, in trials or in prosperity, in giving or receiving our song is the same, "To God be the glory;"

We have the *same care* one for another (1 Cor. 12:26), "and when one member of his body suffers, all the members of the body suffer with it; or if one member of his body be honored (fulfilled and happy), all the members rejoice with it." And by this shall all men know that you are my disciples!

A Better Idea

I never had a better idea of believing in Jesus than I once had from a poor countryman. I may have mentioned this before; but it struck me very forcibly at the time, and I cannot help repeating it. Speaking about faith, he said, "The old enemy has been troubling me very much lately; but I told him that he must not say anything to me about my sins; he must go to my Master, for I had transferred the whole concern to him, bad debts and all." That is believing in Jesus; believing is giving up all we have Christ and taking all that Christ has to ourselves. It is changing houses with Christ, changing clothes with Christ, changing our unrighteousness for his righteousness, changing our sins for his merits.

The Time of My Departure Is at Hand

2 Timothy 4:6

"Departure" is an appropriate and easy representation of death because, understand that a departure signifies moving from one place to another. It is not to cease to exist. We depart this world of sin to dwell eternally with Our Lord and with our friends who have departed.

"The Time" for my departure has nothing to do with chance, good or bad health, nor accidents; but that day has been set and settled by my heavenly Father since eternity past. It cannot be altered, nor would we desire it to be.

“Is at Hand.” “Don't talk about death,” says one! But our Lord tells us to, “number our days and apply our hearts to wisdom.” Why would I not talk about, consider, and plan for the greatest event of my entire existence —“to be absent from this body and to be present forever with the Lord”? My advanced age, weakness of body, and the absence of so many of my peers all cry loud and clear, “The time of my departure is at hand.” “Lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).

I Am the Vine, Ye Are the Branches

John 15:5

Christ, himself, is the true Vine, the spring, and source of life. We are the branches who have no existence apart from him.

Believers are truly one with Christ. When one looks at a vineyard, he does not distinguish between vine and branches; they are one!

Those branches which are truly in Christ will surely bring forth fruit of love, joy, peace, grace, and mercy; for this is the nature of the vine, and his life, power, and spirit produce such. “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit” (Matt. 7:17-18).

Wisdom

Wisdom is more than knowledge, information, and recognized education. A person may have these and still not be wise. Spurgeon once said, “Knowledge is the horse; wisdom is the rider who controls the horse and steers him in the right direction.”

Wisdom is the proper combination of truth and spirit.

Wisdom is the proper union of faith and conduct.

Wisdom is discernment of heart and discipline of mouth.

Wisdom is knowing the will of God and yielding to it in spite of frowns or flattery, friends or foes.

Wisdom is the gift of God. “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God” (James 1:5).

The Law Is Not Made for A Righteous Man

1 Timothy 1:9

No man is righteous in himself. The righteous man here intended is the man who believes in Christ with the heart unto righteousness and who lays hold on Christ's righteousness by faith, in consequence of which he lives soberly, righteously, and godly, though not without sin! The law of God does not lie as a weight and burden on him. (1) he delights in the law of God, and God's commandments are not grievous to him; (2) nor does its curse and penalty lie on him as a punishment to be borne; (3) nor is it a terrifying law to him, bringing him into bondage and fear; (4) nor is it a despised law, forcing him into a way of life he detests.

But the law is enacted for the ungodly, the evil, and the profane; for it is against such persons and their deeds as an accusing, condemning, and terrifying law. Locks on doors are not made for honest men, but for crooks. "Do not steal, kill, lie, etc." are not rules needed by righteous men, but laws enacted to control and convict ungodly men.

"Anything that is contrary to the doctrine of Christ," the law lies against it, takes notice of it, and condemns it. We observe the harmony between God's law and his gospel, rightly understood and used. What is contrary to the one is contrary to the other. The gospel no more excuses sin than the law does. What is repugnant to the moral law of God is also contrary to the gospel of Christ, who said, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it."

Swift to Hear

Wherefore my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear.

James 1:20-21

Let us seize upon every opportunity to hear the word of our Lord from a faithful preacher.

"Let us be slow to speak," either for or against what is heard without thoroughly weighing and considering it in the light of scripture and the person and work of Christ.

"Let us be slow to wrath." A passionate, angry spirit is seldom teachable. The wrath of man does not promote nor persuade men of the righteousness of Christ, and a harsh demeanor does not adorn the gospel of the grace of God!

Assurance

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

Hebrews 10:22

Assurance of salvation and a saving interest in our Lord Jesus is not a feeling cultivated by thinking good thoughts and doing good deeds. Paul calls it, “full assurance of faith.” It has to do with faith, with believing God! Assurance is born of confidence in the Father as our covenant God; “Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.” Assurance is born of confidence in the Son as our just God and Saviour; “By his stripes we are healed.” Assurance is born of confidence in his promises; “Abraham was fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was able also to perform.” So your assurance of redemption is not enhanced by the more you work, but by the more you trust and rest in him. “Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest” (Heb. 4:11).

My Peace I Give unto You

John 14:27

“Peace be to you” was the Jewish salutation (1 Sam. 25:5-6). Under that statement they included all manner of good to their friends, both when they met them or when they departed from them. Our Lord, about to depart from his disciples and return to the Father, said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

This peace Christ gives is his peace, which the world can never bestow, no matter how often they say, “Peace be to you.” It is, “Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer. 6:14); for the peace of the world is at best external and only temporary. It fades as the dew of the morning and the leaves before the blast of winter. The peace he made through the blood of his cross and based on the sure promises of his word is in the heart, eternal, and will strengthen, comfort, and sustain his people through any time or trial. Therefore, he tells the twelve, “Do not be troubled at my departure nor be afraid of the dangers and trials you face, for in the midst of it and for the length of your days you have my presence and my peace.”

Mortify Your Members Which Are Upon Earth

Colossians 3:5

The word “mortify” means to deaden, subdue, or be dead. As Paul wrote in Rom. 6:11, “Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.” What means can be used to subdue our sinful tendencies?

Labor to suppress the thoughts of sin. The old nature with its appetites and desires cannot be annihilated, but it can be suppressed by not cultivating and enjoying the thoughts of sin.

Consider what a wretched thing sin is. It is called “the filthiness of the flesh and spirit” (2 Cor. 7:1). Sin is called “the works of the devil,” and our sins crucified our Lord.

Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. “The fear of the Lord is a bridle to sin,” said Mr. Spurgeon. Solomon wrote, “By mercy and truth iniquity is purged; and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil” (Prov. 16:6). It is said of the wicked, “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Avoid the company of worldly people. He who would not catch the flu should stay away from people who have the flu. If you would suppress your evil nature, cultivate the fellowship of believers whose language, amusements, and conduct honor God.

Be often in the services of worship and preaching. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

Be much in prayer. “Hold up my goings, Lord, in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not” (Psa.17:5). Here is a prayer I found in some old clippings which fits well here. “Lord, keep me from dishonoring thee. Keep me from these defiling sins of my day, that I may not be worse for the times, nor the times worse because of me. Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins. Keep me; for as a little child is only safe in the parent's arms, so I am only safe in thee.”

Looking in The Wrong Direction

It is not good for people to spend their lives seeking God and not finding peace in him. It is not good that we should be ever learning and never able

to rest in the knowledge of Christ. It is not good to be always doubting, and when asked about our doubts to make the untrue excuse, “Oh, I am not doubting God, I am only doubting myself.” No! It is God who promised life in Christ, and it is God whom we are doubting. He said, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. 21:6). “And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17).

Of his promise Bonar wrote, “Thirsty one, it is with the water and not the vessel that our souls need to be concerned! It is not the quality of your vessel, but the quality of the water of life (Christ Jesus) that satisfies, sanctifies, and purifies! And he whose pride will not allow him to drink from a weak, soiled, and broken vessel (such is the best faith) must die of thirst; and he who puts away the promise of reconciliation because of imperfect faith must die the death.” He who says, “I believe the right doctrine, but I don't believe it in the right way; therefore, I can't have peace” is looking totally in the wrong direction and will never find peace.

Hearing the Word of God

You will never be filled with grace nor grow in grace if you care not whom you hear nor what you hear. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Misery awaits the man who builds his hope on anything but God's Word!

The Treasure in Earthen Vessels

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

2 Corinthians. 4:7

Lest we be exalted above measure, lest we forget the pit from which we have been lifted, lest we forget, Who maketh us to differ, lest we forget that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing, and lest we forget that without him we can do nothing, we have this treasure of glory, this gift of life, this knowledge of the glory of God in earthen vessels! This treasure is not in vessels of fine wood, to be admired. This treasure is in vessels of clay, worthless crumbling dirt! “Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.” Why? That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us!

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God!

The Knowledge of The Glory of God

He hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:6

Paul is not speaking of the essential glory of God nor the perfections of his nature and kingdom, as we shall one day behold. The knowledge of the glory of God we now see in the face of Jesus Christ is the glorious gospel of his grace; it is the glorious counsel and covenant mercies in Christ; it is that gospel whereby he shows mercy to whom he will show mercy and is gracious to whom he will be gracious. The glory of God which he has revealed to our hearts is that righteous life and sin-offering which enables God to be just and justifier.

This knowledge of the glory of God in Christ is not a mere head knowledge of fact and doctrines, but it is a life-giving, heart experience of the power, love, grace, and wisdom of God whereby we cry, "Father, father."

Christ has fully declared God, revealed him, interpreted him, and brought God out where he may be seen. Christ is the full revelation of the living God to which no other revelation shall be added

No Hope Apart from Christ

Without Christ crucified, religion is no more than pagan ritualism. All religions have their messiahs, ceremonies, laws, rewards, and punishments. Only the gospel has a crucified, risen, ascended Redeemer. Beware of any hope of the favor of God, acceptance with God, or forgiveness from God apart from the obedience and blood of Christ.

A Note of Interest

Doris and I were married in December 1946. Four months later, we moved to Ashland where I began a ministry as Youth Director of the Pollard Baptist Church. In September 1947, we left Ashland and moved to Chattanooga, TN, where I attended Tennessee Temple College and

pastored the Oakwood Baptist Church. April 1950, we returned to Ashland and I served 18 months as the Assistant Pastor at Pollard under Bro. Don Wells. Bro. Wells resigned the church in September 1951; and October 10, 1951, the congregation called me to be their Pastor. The Lord kept us at Pollard four years while we studied his word and learned more of the mercies of our covenant God. In September 1955, the 13th St. Baptist Church began its ministry in the Putnam Jr. High School auditorium, where we met for one year while this present building was being constructed. "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (2 Thess. 5:18). How thankful we are for the multitude of his mercies, and in his fear do we worship our Lord.

All Things Are of God

I need constantly to remind myself that "all things are of God." Let me not preach, sovereignty and then complain of my lot in life. Let me not talk of Divine purpose and then spend my days murmuring about my trials and troubles. It is totally inconsistent with faith in the sovereign Christ for me to question his good providence. Paul called covetousness "idolatry" and said, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11). I pray for submission, for with it comes peace and rest.

God Made You Willing

No man is saved against his will. No man is pardoned while he hates the thought of forgiveness. No man shall have the joy of the Lord who does not wish to rejoice in him. No! We are not saved against our will, nor is the will taken away; but the Lord God changes the human will and makes men willing in the day of his power, working in them to *will* and to *do* his good pleasure. If you are willing to repent, to receive Christ, to bow to him, depend on it, God made you willing. We bring out the crown of glory and we say, "On whose head shall this crown be placed?" Every true believer will quickly say, "Crown him! He is worthy! He has made us kings and priests to our God."

The Life of Faith

True faith is built upon the strongest evidence possible; the word of God! True faith is a total dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ for all our

needs; such as forgiveness, sanctification, peace, and eternal life. The true believer renounces all confidence in his flesh, rejoices only in Christ Jesus, and worships God in Spirit. He feeds upon Christ as the Bread of Life, embraces Christ as his wedding garment, derives all strength and comfort from Christ, and trusts himself to the care of Christ as his shepherd, teacher, priest, and king. This is the life of faith.

The Death of a Believer

Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn ascendeth in his season.

Job 5:26

1. Death is inevitable. “Thou shalt come to thy grave.” All must die, believers and unbelievers. Our days are numbered and determined by our Lord and we cannot pass!

2. Death is acceptable. “Thou shalt come to thy grave.” We do not usually say men come or go to their graves, for they are carried there by others. But this denotes the willingness of a believer to die and be buried; as Paul, who said, “I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ.” Lost men are forced to die; as Christ said to the rich fool, “This night thy soul shall be required of thee.” But his people are most willing to COME to their graves.

3. Death is timely. “Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,” in a ripe old age and in the fullness of his time. Men sometimes say, “He died before his time.” Oh no! Each one will finish his course.

4. Death is with honor. “Like a shock of corn cometh in his season.” The corn is ripe, fully matured, it's harvest time, and the Lord says, “Burn the tares, but Gather my wheat into my barn” (Matt. 13:30). The wheat is ready for the threshing floor to have all impurities and chaff removed.

What Mean Ye By This Service?

Exodus 12:26

In answer to that question, ye shall say, “It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses.”

When we are asked concerning our observance of the Lord's Supper and are asked, “What mean ye by this service?” what shall we reply?

1. It is the memory of him who is salvation.
2. It is in token of our faith and trust in him.
3. It is evidence of our obedience to him.
4. It is a type of our communion with him, "Christ in you is the hope of glory.
5. It is the blessed hope of drinking it new with him shortly (Luke 22:18).

Love

1. Love is the cement which holds the different stones together in the Lord's temple.
2. Love is the fence which keeps out the wolves of division, discord, and strife.
3. Love is the sheet music which enables all the different instruments and voices in God's church to play and sing together the Song of the Lamb.
4. Love is the cloak which covers a multitude of infirmities, blemishes, and hides our failures from view.

The Holy Spirit

He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you.

John 16:14

The Holy Spirit does not glorify himself, nor magnify his gifts, nor inspire men to preach and talk continuously of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not teach men that being baptized with the Spirit, endowed with gifts, and attaining a higher life experience is better than salvation and receiving Christ by faith. The Holy Spirit always glorifies Christ, speaks of Christ, reveals Christ, and enables believers to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus! Who our Lord is, what he has done, is doing, and will do is the theme of the Holy Spirit's teaching.

Eternal

“And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing but should raise it up again at the last day” (John 6:39). Eternal election and eternal predestination guarantee eternal perseverance and eternal preservation!

Trees of Righteousness

That they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord – that he might be glorified.

Isaiah 61:3

1. Trees are planted by someone! These trees of righteousness are the planting of the Lord. Christ said, “Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13).
2. Trees which live have their roots in water. The trees of righteousness have their roots in Christ, the living water. “And he shall be like a tree planted by the water” (Psalm 1:3).
3. Trees which God plants bring forth fruit. “He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit” (John 15:5). This fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, and humility.
4. Trees which are the planting of the Lord never die! “His leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psalm 1:3).

And in all this God is glorified! From alpha to omega in the redemption and glorification of a sinner, God is glorified! (John 17:1-4.)

Salvation Is the Sovereign Gift of God

It has been suggested by many that if we preach salvation as a sovereign gift of God, it will cause men to sit still and fold their arms. It will not! But if men did so, we could not help their case by giving them error. Our calling is not to prove to you the reasonableness of any truth. God's word is true whether men believe it or not! Our business is not to defend any truth from its consequences. As preachers of the Lord, we are to assert the truth because it is God's word; then if our hearers do not like it, they must settle the quarrel with their Master. We are messengers; Christ is our

message! The Lord has to reveal and apply the message. He must make the unwilling willing, to make the ungodly godly, and bring the rebel to the feet of Christ or else salvation will not be accomplished.

Behold the Lamb of God

The Jews were looking for Messiah to come as a great prophet or a great king. They understood nothing of a “Saviour-Priest,” of a “Lamb of God.” You would think these priests and Levites, who ministered about the temple and the sacrifices, would have inquired about the sacrifice; but no, apparently they had no sense of sin, they were Abraham's seed. They would have welcomed him on the throne, but not on the altar. “Behold the Lamb of God.”

1. In Gen. 4:4 we have the Lamb typified.
2. In Gen. 22:8 we have the Lamb prophesied.
3. In Exo. 12:5-7 we have the Lamb slain and the blood applied.
4. In Isa. 53:1-7 we have the Lamb personified, a man.
5. In John 1:29 we have the Lamb identified.
6. In Rev. 5:6, 13 we have the Lamb magnified and glorified.

When John pointed to the Lord Jesus and said, “Behold the Lamb of God,” the title suggests several things:

1. His *sinlessness*, for he is the Lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1:19).
2. His *gentleness* and willingness to suffer. “He was led (not driven) as a lamb to the slaughter” (Isa. 53:7).
3. His *sacrifice*. He is the Lamb that “taketh away the sin of the world” (Heb. 9:26).
4. The *sufficiency* of that sacrifice. “He taketh away the sin” (Heb. 10:14-17).

Who Is It That Limits the Atonement?

One of the ancient writers asked who it is that limits the atonement of Christ. Is it the preacher who declares that God will justify, pardon, and redeem all for whom Christ died; or is it the preacher who says that God cannot justify, pardon, and redeem anyone for whom Christ died unless the sinner, of himself, appropriates the blood through his own faith?

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 2001

The Savor of Life

We are determined to preach the word of truth concerning God's character, man's lost condition, and Christ's sufficiency and willingness to save, regardless of the results; but how blessed it is when our gospel becomes, "the savor of life unto life."

My Soul, Wait thee Only Upon God

Psalm 62

Amid all the trials, conflicts, and attacks from the enemies of his soul, David always returned to his original hope, as the dove returned to the ark. "My soul, wait thou only upon God." The battle is the Lord's; and he only can justify, comfort, and keep me. "My expectation is from him" (vs. 5). In him dwells all fullness, all blessings, and all wisdom. He will exalt me in due time, for "He only is my rock and my salvation" (vs. 6). If God be for me, who or what can be against me? And really, what does it matter who is against me, for I am complete in him and accepted of the Father in him. "He only is my defense" (vs. 6) against false charges or true charges. So, I will "Trust in him at all times" (vs. 8); in times of prosperity or poverty, for I know (or should know) how to abound or to be abased. In times of fellowship or loneliness, he will never leave me. In times of health, sickness, or death, he is my refuge. I will "Pour out my heart before him" (vs. 8). His heart is set on us; let us set our hearts upon him. Let our inmost desires, doubts, thoughts, sorrows, and joys be poured out like water before the Lord. Hide nothing from him, for nothing can be hid from him. We shall learn to pray when we learn to be open and honest before the Lord!

Everlasting Love

Faith is the gift of God. Does our Father love us because he *called* us? No! He saved us, called us, and blesses us because he *loved* us! His love preceded any and every gift. “For God so loved that he gave his only Son.” His gifts accepted did not bring his love to us either, because he loved us in Christ before he gave salvation and before we embraced him. And if any person says, “God loves us because we do this or that for God,” that person talks nonsense. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31:3).

The Sheep Shall Be Saved

The straying sheep, the wandering sheep, the lost sheep has an owner; and however far it may stray from the fold, it ceases not to belong to that owner! This is what our Lord said, “Other sheep I have, them also I must bring and they shall be one fold and one shepherd.” The Lord will bring back into the fold every one of his own sheep, and they shall all be saved.

I Trust Him

It is not my hold of Christ that saves, but his hold of me. It is not my promise to him which keeps me, but his promise to me. It is not my works which make me righteous before God, but his perfect life and obedience. My best is but filthy rags. I trust him on the strength and authority of his word. He died for those who believe; Lord, I believe! He promised to save all who trust him, trust him! He said, “All that my Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” I came to him, I am coming to him, and by God's grace, I shall continue to come.

Christ Is All or Nothing

If you seek acceptance before God in any measure whatsoever upon the basis of the law, you will never be accepted at all. Christ alone is our acceptance before God. He is all our righteousness, all our sanctification, all our holiness, all our redemption, and all our peace. To add anything to his finished work is to make his work vain and useless. Christ will be all, or he will be nothing.

The Mirror

When a person stands before a mirror, he sees three things; the mirror, himself, and other things which are in the room. When I sincerely look by faith into the scriptures, I see many things, but primarily three things.

1. I see the Lord Jesus Christ, for he verily is the word of God. It is of him, from him, and to his glory that it is written. "To him give all the prophets witness."
2. I see myself as I truly am, for the word reveals the true nature and need of this son of Adam. "Lord, be merciful to me, the sinner! Let thy blood atone for me on the mercy-seat."
3. I see other people and my relationship and my responsibility to them! The image of myself reflected in a mirror is larger than others in the room, but not so with the scriptures. "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:27-28).

Paul rebuked those at Ephesus who "walked in the vanity of their own minds and desires," and said to them, "You have not so learned Christ." The person who is often in the word of Christ is often in prayer, in concern, and in the care and concerns of others!

I Am Where He Put Me

Every stone (living stone) that is in our Lord's temple, he ordained that it should be put where it is! Even those stones which are in obscure, difficult, and unseen places serve his eternal, pre-arranged purpose. Let us be content to honor and serve Christ where we are, doing what we are gifted and called of God to do. We will ultimately fail trying to do something else, however honorable and attractive it may seem to us!

A Sure Hope of Mercy

Give me a sovereign, omnipotent Lord of heaven and earth, with authority over all the universe of men and angels, and I will preach to you a sure hope of mercy and grace!

A Good Opinion of Self

The first thing the Holy Spirit does when he comes into a person's heart is this: he finds that person with a very good opinion of himself. And there is nothing which prevents a person coming to Christ like a good opinion of himself. The Holy Spirit must lay bare that heart and let him see the loathsome disease of sin, uncover to him all the evil and defilement of the human heart. "The heart is deceitful above all and desperately wicked; who can know it?" But it must be known before the sinner will fall at the feet of Christ and cry, "God, be merciful to me the sinner." Actually, the Spirit of God not only reveals the corruptions of our EVIL deeds, but the corruptions of our BEST deeds, until the convicted sinner weeps with Wesley and says,

"Depths of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God his wrath forbear?
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?"

Need Not Say a Word Pastor

The story is told of a certain pastor who was disturbed greatly because one of his dear brethren was getting too involved in other things and was absent from the worship services. One Sunday evening at the close of the service, the pastor went to his friend's house and found him sitting before an open fire. Somewhat startled by the appearance of his pastor (who spoke not a word), the man pulled up another chair before the fire, waiting for words of rebuke from his visitor; but none came. The minister took his seat before the fire and silently took the tongs and lifted a glowing coal from the midst of its fellows and laid it by itself on the hearth. Remaining silent, both men watched the blaze die and the coal grow dark. Then the truant brother opened his mouth and said, "You need not say a word, pastor; I will be there Wednesday night."

No Condemnation in Christ

The scriptures plainly say, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life." I plan to leave it right there; adding nothing and taking nothing away. Jesus Christ is the all-sufficient Saviour, and he that believes on him is not condemned.

The Greatest Glory of his Nature

That God is able in his mercy, grace, and wisdom to make a way for our sins to be laid on a substitute and the guilty sinner to go free is the greatest glory of his nature that he has seen fit to reveal. “O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out.”

The Lord Is Good

“The Lord is good unto them that wait for him” (Lamentations 3:25). Do you suppose there could ever be found one who sincerely waited upon God, sought his will and his glory, who did not receive his grace and mercy? That proposition deserves one of the Apostle Paul's “God forbid!” Our Lord is eternally good and gracious to all who call upon him, to all who desire his will and wait for the revelation thereof. One of the old writers put it this way, “I sought the Lord, and then I knew that it was really he that sought me! I waited and found the Lord, and afterward I knew that it was he who found me!” This is our hope, the Lord is good.

A Man Sent from God

There never shall come a day when the Lord's church shall be without true preachers of the gospel of Christ, who shun not to declare all the counsel of God, who keep back nothing that is profitable to God's people and written in his word, but who (to the day their voices can speak no more) can say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith!” One old-timer said, “Until the sun grows dim with age and the heavenly bodies cease their revolutions, till earth under the judgment of God shall melt and vanish away, the voice of God's true preacher declaring the gospel of his glory in Christ Jesus must and shall be heard.” John 1:6 declares, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John;” and there always will be a man sent until time shall be no more.

Grace

People talk of grace as if it were something they could use, and not an influence having a power over them. Grace is something, not which I improve, but which improves me, employs me, works on me. Let people

talk as they will about universal grace. It is all nonsense; there is no such thing, nor can there be. They may talk correctly of universal blessing, because we see that the natural gifts of God are scattered everywhere, more or less; and men may receive them or reject them.

It is not so, however, with grace. Men cannot take the grace of God and employ it in turning themselves from darkness to light. The light does not come to the darkness and say, "Use me;" but the light comes and drives the darkness away. Life does not come to the dead man and say, "Use me to be restored to life." The spiritual influence does not come to the dry bones and say, "Use this power to clothe yourselves with flesh;" but it clothes them with flesh, and the work is done.

This Is Important!

"He believes the doctrines of grace and defends the message you preach." I have heard this comment made occasionally regarding individuals who do not manifest a strong interest in the word of God nor a spirit of joy and fellowship with other believers. And my answer is that it will not save me to know that Christ is the Saviour; but it will save me to trust him with all my heart to be my Saviour. I shall not be delivered from condemnation by believing that God is sovereign, election is true, and Christ's atonement is particular and limited to the sheep. But I shall be saved when God breaks my heart over my sin, brings me to receive, love, and adore my Redeemer whose blood and righteousness is my life, hope, trust, and my all. It is not the life-buoy on board the ship that saves a drowning man, nor is it his belief that the life-buoy is an excellent invention! No! He must be in the life-buoy or he perishes!

Love

As the affectionate wife obeys her husband because she loves him, so does the redeemed soul delight in obeying the commandments of our Lord, although compelled by no force but that of love. The divine principle of love will render every duty pleasant, even when the labor itself is difficult and burdensome.

Another word on this subject; Paul, in 1 Cor. 13 mentions the three main graces. (1) Faith, by which we look to Christ, receive Christ, and live upon him; (2) Hope, by which we wait for the fulfillment of every promise in Christ; and (3) Love to God and men. Yet love exceeds the others as to its duration and use. Faith will one day give way to sight and be needed no

more. Hope will give way to experience. But love ever lives and shall only expand and be perfected.

“To see the law by Christ fulfilled
And hear his pardoning voice
Changes a slave into a child
And duty into choice!” - W. Cowper

You Will Be Eaten by Cannibals

When the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland could not find a man to go as a missionary to the South Seas, John Paton, a famous Bible teacher in Glasgow, resolved to go. When they learned of his resolve, all his friends besieged him with opposition. “The cannibals,” said one. “You will be eaten by cannibals!” Firm in his determination to go in spite of all the opposition, John Paton said, “I confess to you that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus Christ, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms; and in the great day my resurrection body will arise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer.”

A True Ambassador

A true ambassador of Christ is more concerned for the name of his Lord Jesus and the word of Christ than for his own name, reputation, or station. That preacher is willing to lose the world's favor, goods, and company rather than that his Lord should be dishonored and his gospel compromised.

The King's Garden

A certain king had a spacious and beautiful flower garden which he left to the care of a faithful servant, who delighted in caring for each plant tenderly and lovingly. One morning the servant rose with joy to care for the king's flowers. To his surprise, he found one of his choicest beauties cut from its stem and gone. Looking about, he missed several other prized and precious flowers! Full of grief and anger, he approached his fellow-servants and demanded who had taken away his treasures. They had not

done it, and he found no solace for his grief until one of them remarked, “My lord, the king was walking in the garden this morning, and I saw him pluck the flowers and carry them to his court.” The servant was comforted that the master had been pleased to take his own flowers, and he went his way smiling at his loss because his lord had taken them. So, you and I have lost those whom we love with much tender affection. They are gone from our sight and touch. But remember, the Lord has taken those flowers which are His, which he loaned to us for a while, which we shall one day see again in his court, never to be separated again. Let this be your comfort and do not yield yourselves to an excess of grief.

Repent and Believe Now

The Lord God “commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). When? Now! The command of God is to, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” When? Now! God demands immediate obedience to his Son and belief of his gospel. Nothing less than sincere faith in Christ now is pleasing to God! The thief may desire to quit stealing, and he may pray to be able to give it up; yet he is still a thief and a rebel until he actually repents and gives up his dishonest life. Men may listen to the gospel, and desire the blessings of the gospel, and even pray to believe; but “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). Now! There is no such thing as being “almost a Christian.” Our Lord said, “He that is not with me is against me” (Matt. 12:30). Regardless of one's knowledge, information, and intentions, if he is not now a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is antichrist!

The Promises

*For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him
Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*

2 Corinthians 1:20

Our God has given many promises to his believing children. These promises are all in Christ Jesus, since only he existed when they were made, and since only he can and has fulfilled all conditions by his obedience and death. Therefore, these promises are all “yes” in him and in him “amen,” or “So be it,” “unto the glory of God by us.” His promises, Christ fulfilling them, our preaching him, and your believing are all for the glory of God.

A Lullaby to Our Soul

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” What a promise! What a glorious inheritance! What a blessed comfort! Walk in it, believer; lie down upon it; trust in it; rest upon it. It will do for all the days of your life and be a soft pillow for your death. When the news is not good, when your body is tired, when disappointment and doubts fill your mind, when the flesh is weary and weak and you lie upon your bed staring into the sleepless darkness asking yourself, “What shall I do?” hum to yourself these blessed words, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” Those words will be like a lullaby to your soul, and you will find rest.

Ignorance

I believe that very much of Arminianism is simply ignorance of the scriptures, and very much worldliness, and compromise of principles is surely ignorance of Christ.

The Cross

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 6:14

Paul is not referring only to the tree on which our Lord died, or even to his death alone. When Paul said, “I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified,” he refers to all that our Lord purposed and promised for his people in the covenant of grace; he refers to all that our Lord Jesus is to us; wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; he refers to all that our Lord has done, is doing, and will do for us as our Redeemer and Saviour; for without the cross, none of the above is effected or even exists! Without the cross there is no covenant, no kingdom, no song of Redemption, and no glory and honor for the Christ. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). To glory in the cross and to preach the cross is to glory in and preach Christ; for at the cross his attributes are glorified, his covenant accomplished, his people redeemed, and his enemies defeated.

God's Love for Jacob

There is an old anecdote about this passage which puts it in its proper perspective. The story goes that a skeptic approached a Christian with a sneer that the Bible could not be true because of this passage, "Esau have I hated." The skeptic said, "Imagine *that* in the Bible, spoken about a God who is *said* to be love!" The Christian replied that there was, indeed, a great difficulty in the verses, and the skeptic complimented him on his willingness to admit it. "But," replied the Christian, "there is no difficulty at all in the phrase you have quoted. Esau was a hateful sinner, and we couldn't have much respect for a God who would love him in his unchanged condition. God in His justice must find an Esau hateful. The great difficulty lies in the preceding phrase, 'Jacob have I loved;' for Jacob was a liar and a swindler; and the fact that God could manifest love toward him constitutes our real problem. This can only be understood in the light of the death of Jesus Christ. There is truly a great problem! That God loved Jacob is a wonder surpassed only by the fact that God loved me!

Ready to Every Good Work

*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers,
to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.*

Titus 3:1

From this scripture and others like Titus 2:10, "that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," it is evident that Paul thought it most important for all believers to be law-abiding, peaceful people, walking in obedience and love, submitting to those in authority. We are all by nature desirous of power and prone to have our own way. It takes much grace to be an obedient servant, a submissive wife or child, a peaceful neighbor, a good citizen, especially if those in authority are opposed to our Lord and his grace. But our testimony and witness to others will carry little influence if the fruits of grace are not visible in our lives. It is not enough for us to deliver sound doctrine and truth; our words, works, and attitude should be a pattern of what we preach! Everything that unbelievers and doubters can seize upon, which to them is improper and unbecoming to a professed believer, they will use maliciously against Christ and his gospel.

Think About This!

It is a fact that thousands of people live close to our church buildings where we worship God, sing praises to his name, and preach the gospel of God's grace; the same message preached by the great fathers of past years. But these people never dream of entering our buildings; they are not interested nor even curious about our message or what we are doing.

Why is this? I believe the answer lies in the growing popularity of religious sensationalism and entertainment. As this appetite for new attractions, new revelations, new methods, and emotionalism has increased, it becomes impossible to meet its demands; for people are demanding more and more of the noise, fleshly exhibitions, theatrics, and music. The world's preachers are trying to please the people, and yet trying to keep God's name in the chaos somewhere and call it "faith" fellowship and "new life" church. It is all like the road the drunk took which resulted in his destruction. At first the fiery beverage had to be watered down, but the next drink must be stronger, and soon it must be 100 proof! The churches started with truth and watered down the activities and entertainment. Now they are drunk; and if they are exposed to a true worship service and a scriptural message on the glory of God's redeeming grace, they say, "This is a dead church."

How We Know We Are in Christ

Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him.

1 John 2:5

He who treasures the word of Christ, who bears in mind his precepts, who observes his message in its entirety—has in him the love of God, and love for God has been established and is reaching maturity. This is the way that we know that we are in Christ—we love him, his word, his will, his presence. One cannot separate Christ and his teaching and commandments!

Calvinism

Calvinism is simply preaching the eternal Lord of lords and King of kings at the head of all things. We, here at this church, look at everything in its relation to God's glory and his covenant in Christ Jesus. We see God first and foremost, and man far, far down the list; at the bottom, would you agree? It's because we think too highly of God that we cannot please this generation.

A Word to The Troubled in Heart

2 Corinthians 4:7-9

“We are troubled” and oppressed in every way. We are never free from one trial or another. We are in the world and expect tribulations (John 16:1-4, 33; 15:19-20), yet we are “not distressed.” We have the peace of God, the manifestations of his love and care, a freedom to the throne, and sufficient grace for every trial (2 Cor. 12:9). “We are perplexed;” the word signifies doubting and uncertainty. We are often uncertain and in doubt about what will happen to us; and sometimes we know not what to do, which way to take, nor how our needs shall be supplied; but we are “not in despair.” We do not despair of the leadership, help, presence, and support of our Lord. We are “persecuted” of men, cursed, threatened, and despised because we profess Christ and preach Christ crucified, risen, and exalted. But we are “not forsaken” of our Lord, who owns us and causes us always to triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Neither are we forsaken by those who love Christ, for they support us in prayer and provisions. We are “cast down” like an earthen vessel is sometimes cast out or thrown to the earth, seemingly forgotten and deserted. But we are “not destroyed.” We live by the mighty power of God and are immortal until his work in us, through us, and by us is done. Whatever the condition of God's children in this world, they have a “but not” to comfort them. Their case may be bad, but not hopeless; for he is their hope!

Two things support the believer under any trial: first, seeing the Lord's hand and purpose in it all (Rom. 8:28) and second, looking by faith beyond this world to that glory which our Lord has prepared for those who love him. “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal”(2 Cor.4:18).

Despise Not Prophecyings

1 Thessalonians 5:20-21

Do not despise, make light of, nor be indifferent to the message of those who preach and interpret the word of God. I know that many in our day feel almost disgusted with the very word “preaching” because there are so many foolish and ignorant persons giving out worthless sermons from the pulpits of this country. Therefore, let us prove all preaching by the scriptures and hold fast to that which is good! Let us all follow the example of the Bereans “Who received the word preached with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily to see if these things be so” (Acts 17:11). Some hearers are critical of everything they hear; some people embrace anything they hear; the wise weigh all things they hear by the word of God (1 John 4:1-3).

The Hope of his Calling

“That you may know what is the hope of his calling.” By which is meant either (1) the hope of external happiness, (2) Christ, who is our hope, (3) the grace of hope, which is an exercise of faith, or (4) all three! For the hope of eternal glory is founded on Christ, and the grace of hope lives only in the heart where Christ dwells! As we know more of Christ, we know more of the hope of his calling.

Our Speech Should Reveal

*Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt,
that you may know how you ought to answer every man.*

Colossians 4:6

While our conversations and talk should be much about the grace of God to us in Christ Jesus, and we should take advantage of every opportunity to talk about the doctrines of grace and salvation by grace alone, not by works and human merit, yet this is not what Paul refers to in this scripture. He is saying that our speech, conversation, and communication with others should be such that it reveals a work of God's grace within us; that our language and words should show forth the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, humility, and faith; that our speech should reveal to others that we have, indeed, been with Jesus Christ. To speak with grace is to tell the

truth, to speak the truth in love, to speak kindly and pleasantly, and to avoid sowing discord and division. Harsh words reveal a hard heart. Grace is to the speech what salt is to meat. It makes it acceptable, good to the ear, and a blessing to the heart. Grace in the heart will teach us how we ought to answer to every man!

The Law Was Never Given to Save

As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse of the law.

Galatians 3:10

As many as seek acceptance before God, justification from sin and eternal life by their own works and righteousness, are under the curse of the law; for the law requires doing, not knowing, or hearing, or approving, but perfectly doing all that it requires in word, thought, and deed. There were many justified before the law was written, and there were many justified during the legal dispensation; but no one was ever justified by his obedience to the law! The law was never given to save, but to reveal sin, to stop our mouths, and to shut us up to our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. “The just shall live by faith.”

Faith Without Works Is Dead Faith

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead

James 2:17

Faith that has no works is a dead, useless, false faith! Works without faith are dead works. Faith without works is dead faith. Good works are second acts, necessarily flowing from the life of faith. By these works there is clear evidence that faith is living and active. Those who perform them in the name of Christ are true and living believers. Works are not infallible proof of genuine faith, but the absence of works is certain proof of the absence of faith!

Christ our Advocate

My little children, I write unto you that you sin not.

1 John 2:1

John does not hold out the possibility that any person can be totally free from sin. This would be totally contrary to all scripture. But he is saying, "I write this Epistle to you that you might not live in sin, indulge the flesh, walk in disobedience, and behave like the world of the unregenerate!"

"And if any man sin..." as everyone does, even every person who walks in light and fellowship with God, believes Christ, and is justified by his blood. As much as we hate sin, we are still in a body of flesh and sin. But we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, our Great High Priest, who makes intercession for us. Because our sins were laid on him and he made full satisfaction for them, we are forgiven!

His Divine Power

According as his divine power hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

2 Peter 1:3

His divine power, which designed, created, and sustains all things in the universe and will one day destroy it and make a new heaven and a new earth.

His divine power, which purposed and established the everlasting covenant of grace (the kingdom of his dear Son), chose and gave to him, as their surety, a people which no man can number.

His divine power, which put a human life and body in the virgin's womb and incarnated himself (the everlasting Father) in flesh.

His divine power, which lived on earth a perfect life, obeyed, honored, and magnified the holy laws and precepts of God to give his people the righteousness of God.

His divine power, which by his own death and the shedding of his own blood satisfied God's divine justice for his chosen race and enabled God to be both just and Justifier.

His divine power, by which he conquered Satan, sin, death, and hell! He raised himself from the tomb and ascended to the right hand of the majesty in heaven, our great High Priest, Advocate and Forerunner.

His divine power, by which he called us out of spiritual death, the kingdom of darkness, and the curse of the law and gave unto us all things that pertain to life, godliness, glory and virtue!

Precious Faith

We have obtained like precious faith through the righteousness of God and of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:1

We did not obtain the righteousness of God by our faith, but we obtain this precious faith through the righteousness of God! Faith has no causal effect or influence upon the righteousness of God (which is the work and gift of Christ alone); but the righteousness of God and our Saviour has all to do, with faith! When by the gospel the Spirit of God reveals to a sinner the glorious and gracious person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, faith is born in him. “This is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the son and believeth on him may have everlasting life” (John 6:40). One cannot call upon nor believe in a Saviour of whom he has not heard or whose righteous work he has not seen! Therefore, when by his preached word God shows us who Christ is, the precious blood he shed, the holy life for us he lived that our God might be just and justify us, and reveals to us our Mediator at his right hand, he will at the same time work faith in us. He that seeth the Son by the light which God shines in his heart will believe on him, will look only to him, will never depart from him, and will reign forever with him. Sight is not given to those who believe; faith is the result of seeing Christ, our righteousness. I am positive that if Almighty God is pleased to reveal Christ, you will believe him.

And Be Not Conformed to This World

Romans 12:2

The word “world” means the nature, character, opinions, goals, and attitudes of unregenerate men. The worldly man seeks the praise of men; the believer seeks the praise of God. The worldling thinks only of himself; the believer considers others. The worldling cares for the body; the believer cares for the soul. The worldling looks only upon that which is seen; the believer looks on that which is unseen. The worldling cares for

what he shall eat, drink, and wear; the believer seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

We Are the Circumcision

Philippians 3:3

We are the true circumcision, not they. They have the name, the form, the outward sign. We have in Christ and in the new birth its fulfillment. It is the difference between having the lamb of the Old Testament sacrifice and having Christ, the Lamb of God.

1. True circumcision is having the heart pricked and laid open by the Spirit.
2. True circumcision is a renouncing of our own righteousness.
3. True circumcision is of the heart, not the flesh.
4. It is to draw nigh to God with the heart, not the body.
5. It is to rejoice in our completeness in Christ, having no confidence in carnal descent, tribe or family, ceremony or law. Our salvation and acceptance by God is only in Christ, not in anything connected with this flesh.

Studying the Scriptures

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another.

Colossians 3:16

Paul exhorts us to a diligent study of God's word. This study of the word is not for information and doctrine alone, but that our Lord's word might become a part of us, such a part of us that it is said to dwell in us, as a member of the family lives in a home. The word of God is loved, respected, obeyed, and delighted in richly in an abundant manner. We are not to study just one part of the scriptures, but all of it, that we may benefit and grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ, and that we may teach others his word. It is not only the duty of ministers and elders to teach and encourage others, but it is the duty of all believers to be ready always to give to every man that as asketh them a reason of the hope that is in us, with knowledge, meekness, and fear. "Lord, give us a love for your word, an understanding of your word, and the wisdom to be a good witness of your gospel."

For When I Am Weak, Then Am I Strong

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Three times in definite, dedicated, and sincere prayer, Paul asked the Lord to deliver him from this affliction, to remove it from him; but the Lord refused, telling Paul that his grace was sufficient to support him and uphold him under any trial or circumstance. Besides, God's strength and grace are never more glorified or appreciated than when we are made to realize and feel our own weakness and inability! Therefore, Paul said, "I will all the more rejoice in and accept my weaknesses and infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon and be revealed in me; for when I am weak in myself and aware of my inability, then the Lord reveals his grace, his wisdom, and his power; and this is my real strength!"

Reckoned of Grace

To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

Romans 4:4

To the laborer in religion, what he merits or earns can never be called a gift, a favor, or mercy; it is an obligation owed to him. If work is involved at all in our salvation (regardless of the degree of work), it is a debt and not grace at all. It is not that the believer does no good works, but that he does not work in order to obtain life and salvation. We work because we love Christ Jesus, not in order to be justified.

I Constantly Remember

Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.

1 Thessalonians 1:3

"I constantly remember" with thanksgiving before God (1) "your work," energized and activated by your faith. True faith is a working grace. Faith that does not produce good works and obedience is not saving faith (James 2:14-20). (2) "Your labors," motivated by love! Love to Christ and to one another will engage a believer in worship, prayer, and in ministering

cheerfully to the needs of others. Labors and works motivated by anything but love are not pleasing to God.

An Offering in Righteousness

And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Malachi 3:3

One can see the experienced refiner of precious metal. He made the fire; he knows how hot it should be; he knows when to put the metal into the fire, how long to leave it, and when to take it out. All the time he sits (unalarmed and untroubled) and waits for the purifying process to do its work. Our Lord Jesus (the refiner of his jewels) has come to this earth and finished the work given to him. He is exalted at his Father's right hand, seated until his church is called out and his enemies are made his footstool. This verse denotes his constant care over his people from the cradle to the grave. His eye is upon them at all times and in all their ways. He will purify these "sons of Levi," for they are all priests; and he will purge them and try them that they may believe him, love him, worship him, and offer to him sacrifices of love, praise, and thanksgiving in righteousness. He made the fire; he knows how hot it should be; he knows when to put the gold into the fire, how long to leave it, and when to take it out. "But he knoweth the way I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

The Witness of God

He who believes on the Lord Jesus as the eternal Lord, who came in the flesh, obeyed and honored the law, brought in everlasting righteousness and justification for all who believe, has the witness of God in himself. His faith is not just a religious creed but a heart experience, not just a set of facts accepted but a living Lord revealed in him by the Holy Spirit. He knows his sin against God, the insufficiency of his own righteousness, his inability to please God or atone for sin, and that without Christ he can do

nothing. He has experienced the peace, joy, and rest that come from finding all things in Christ (Col. 2:9-10).

Christ The God Man

When our Lord came to earth, he did not cease to be God, for God was manifest in the flesh.

1 Timothy 3:16

When our Lord Jesus arose from the grave and ascended to the right hand of the Father, he did not cease to be man. “There is one mediator between God and men, The man Christ Jesus.” And when he returns, “We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

The Greatest Blasphemy

He who does not believe on Christ is guilty of the greatest blasphemy. It is God (not men) that he does not believe, and he has made the God of truth to be a liar because he refuses the heavenly witness concerning Christ! Some wonder why God commends faith so much and condemns unbelief so severely. The glory of God is implicated in this. It is God who has borne witness of salvation in Christ.

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 2002

The Bible Is the Best Safeguard

If anyone should ask me, "What is the best safeguard against false doctrine?" I answer in one word, "The Bible!" The word of God regularly read, studied, and heard preached is the only sure weapon against the schemes and attacks of Satan and the religious world. Our Lord gave us this powerful example: when tempted of Satan, he replied, "It is written." You and I need to be so familiar with scripture that we can use the sword of the Spirit; the word of God—effectively.

Who Maketh Us to Differ?

Why is it that you and I are not sitting here in this place today indifferent to the word of God, hardened to the gospel? Why are we not at this very hour hearing the word preached with the outward ear only but rejecting it in our hearts? Why is it that we love the word preached, rejoice in the altogether lovely Redeemer, and find a peace of heart that passes knowledge? Have we made ourselves to differ? God forbid! It was as Isaac Watts wrote:

"'Twas the same love which spread the feast
That sweetly forced us in;
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sins."

Why Regeneration Is Called A New Creation

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.
2 Corinthians 5:17

The old creation and the new creature have the same author. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Paul said in Eph. 2:10, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus."

The first thing in the new creation as well as the old is *light*! "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." 2 Cor. 4:6, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ."

The first creation is out of *nothing*; so is the new creation! I Pet. 2:10, "In time past you were not a people, but are now the people of God." Eph. 2:1, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead."

The Spirit of God and the word of God gave the world its being even as we were born again by the Spirit and the word. Moses wrote, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, "Let there be light; and there was light."

The same word and power which created the world now sustains and supports it! "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store" (2 Pet. 3:7). Even so, "We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

When the Lord God finished the first creation, he surveyed it with satisfaction. Gen.1:31, "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." Even so, "We are made the very righteousness of God in Christ."

Philip Doddridge wrote in 1755; "That spotless robe, which he hath wrought, shall cleanse and cover all around; and by the holy eye of God not one blemish shall be found."

Do Not Be Deceived

He that doeth righteousness is righteous.
1 John 3:7

Do not be deceived by false prophets and wicked persons who preach that it does not matter how a person lives, provided he believes the gospel, or that knowledge of theology is sufficient without obedience to the lordship

of Christ in conduct. This is not true. One cannot separate faith and conduct. As Christ our Lord showed himself to be a righteous man by doing good, obeying the Father, and demonstrating love and compassion, so those who are united to him by faith, justified by his grace, and regenerated by his Spirit will seek to imitate their Lord. As a tree is known by its fruit, so a righteous man is known by his works. Good fruit does not make a tree good but shows it to be good; so good works do not make us righteous (only Christ can do that) but show us to be so (James 2:14-20, 26).

Elijah's Prayer

1 Kings 18:36-37

After Elijah's awesome battle with the false prophets to determine the true God, when they had exhausted themselves, crying and praying to their idols to no avail, Elijah stepped forth before the altar inundated with barrels of water and prayed a sixty-three word prayer: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again!"

"Then the fire of the Lord fell." (Verse 38).

True Repentance

Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11

When a believer has sinned or been guilty of a poor attitude or conducted himself in a way which is a bad example to others, a godly sorrow will lead him to repentance and deliverance. That godly sorrow will produce many evidences of the genuineness and sincerity of his repentance.

Seven words are used in V. 11 to describe the effects of genuine godly sorrow: "What carefulness," to avoid future offenses in this area.

"What clearing of yourselves," not by denying our guilt or justifying it, but confessing and seeking forgiveness.

"What indignation," not against God or his law or his preacher for pointing out our sin, but against ourselves for our folly.

“What fear,” not of hell and judgment, but of God our Father, for bringing reproach on his name.

“What vehement desire” to right what has been wrong, to be back in fellowship, to live for his glory and praise.

“What zeal” for God and his glory, for the testimony of the gospel, for the unity of the church, and to never be an offense nor stumbling block to God’s people.

“What revenge,” not against any person in a private way (that belongs to God), but against sin and disobedience of every sort, whether found in us or in others.

Faith Believes All Is Done

Faith in Christ is *not to work* but to cease from our labor and to rest in him for all things. Faith in Christ is not to do anything, but to believe and own that *all is done* in him, by him, and is imputed to us so fully that we are rewarded as if we did it ourselves!

The Trial of Your Faith

“Having your behavior honest among people, that whereas they speak against you and the gospel you believe, they may by your good works, good spirit and attitude, which they see, glorify God" (1 Peter 2:12).

Sometimes the Lord visits his people in prosperity, sometimes in poverty, sometimes in joy, sometimes in sorrow, sometimes in success, and sometimes in great disappointment. These are all times of testing and come under one heading, "The trial of your faith." How we conduct ourselves under these different times of trial will determine whether those who observe us will (1) Glorify God or (2) Laugh at our profession! The natural man (our neighbors, family, and fellow-workers) are opposed to the gospel of God's sovereign grace and speak against it. Yet, when real trial and examination is put upon us and we are able to conduct ourselves in an honest, righteous, and loving manner, they must admit that we are different and that the grace of God has given us something which they would like to have. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

The Appearances of Our Lord After His Resurrection

After our Lord had risen from the dead, appeared to Mary, and twice to his disciples, he showed himself to seven of the disciples who had gone to Galilee according to his instructions (Matt. 28:10, 16). These appearances were more than just physical appearances in order that they could see him and know that he lives. He manifested himself to them in his divine majesty, his resurrected glory, his love and compassion for them, and his victorious, redemptive work (John 20:28-31). Here are the recorded appearances of Christ after his resurrection. There may have been more; we do not know (Acts 1:3).

1. To Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:11-18).
2. To the women (Matt. 28:9-10).
3. To Cleopas and his companion (Lk. 24:13-35).
4. To Simon (Lk. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).
5. To the disciples, Thomas being absent (Jn. 20:19-23).
6. To the disciples, Thomas being present (Jn. 20:24-29).
7. To the seven at the Sea of Galilee (Jn. 21:1-14).
8. To the disciples on the mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20).
9. To the five hundred (1 Cor. 15:6).
10. To James, the Lord's brother (1 Cor. 15:7).
11. To the eleven disciples on Olivet, near Jerusalem (Lk. 24:50-51; Acts 1:4-11).
12. To Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-7).

Does not Give Himself Up to Sin

He that is regenerated by the Spirit of God, in whom Christ is formed, who is a new creature in Christ, does not make sin his practice and the course of his life. He is not without the motions of sin within, nor free from thoughts, words, and deeds of sin in his life; but he does not give himself up to sin, excuse it, nor continue in it as a servant of sin. God's nature and the grace of the Spirit abide in him, and he cannot practice a life of sin; he is born of God! A life of sin is distasteful to him who pants after holiness and desires to be like Christ.

Adorn the Doctrine

That they may adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, in all things.

Titus 3:10

When believers walk in truth and love, when believers adorn their doctrine with grace, generosity, and exemplary lives and behavior, they glorify God! Our Lord said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father" (Matt. 5:16). Good fruit does not make a tree good; the tree itself is first good, and the pleasant fruit is full evidence that the tree is good, even as our fruitfulness does not make us Christ's disciples but is proof that we are his disciples.

Never Wear A Robe

The Lord's preachers claim no priestly power; therefore, they should never wear a peculiar robe or garment. Besides, what purpose does it serve to dress the preacher in a gown? At the same time, the preacher should endeavor, according to his means, to dress respectably and worthy of the office; an ambassador of the King!

The Great Sin of Unbelief

Some wonder why our Lord commends faith so highly and condemns unbelief so severely. The glory of the God of truth is implicated in this. It is God who has given us the record of his Son: it is God who has borne witness throughout the scriptures, and, by his own voice from heaven, of the salvation in Christ. He who does not believe on Christ Jesus is guilty of the greatest blasphemy! It is God (not men) that he does not believe! He has made the God of all truth to be a liar because he refuses God's witness concerning Christ. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one" (1 John 5:7)!

Under the Yoke

1 Timothy 6:1

"Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God be not blasphemed." Every

believer who works for a living has someone with authority over him. This is called being "under the yoke." It is being under the yoke of authority or government, in the service of someone, bought with their money or hired by them. Whether his master is a believer or unbeliever, kind or unkind, good-natured or peevish, the believer is to respect, honor, and obey him, which includes obedience to commands, a good day's work, and respect expressed in word and gesture. If professed believers are lazy, rebellious, disobedient, disrespectful, or careless in their duties, unbelieving masters will say, "Is this their religion? Is this the gospel they preach? Do their God and their doctrine teach them to rebel against authority and destroy the order that exists between man and man?" (Eph. 6:5-6; Col. 3:22-25).

God's Choice

God's choice is also eternal because "God hath from the beginning chosen you." Since God's electing choice was from the beginning and before the foundation of the world, it was an eternal decree that has no end. It began in eternity and will last to eternity because nothing can survive to eternity but what came from eternity. "Yea, I have loved thee," said God, "with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3).

Read the Puritans and the Old Writers

I encourage you to visit our bookstore and become acquainted with the old preachers and their writings. Spurgeon once said, "When I take down a volume of Puritanical theology, I find in a solitary page more thinking, more learning, and more scripture than in the whole folios of modern thought. Most of today's religious leaders would be rich if they possessed even the crumbs that fall from the tables of these old-time, faithful men." Any of the elders and other brethren can help you select books which will bless you and enable you to grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ. Do not make the mistake of some who say, "We will not read anything except the Bible. We will not accept any light except that which comes through our own window. We will not see by another man's candle!" This is total folly! God used men to write the Bible, God used a preacher to interpret the scriptures and preach the gospel to you, and God uses those same sermons and revelations to teach his preachers and children of future years.

An Inward Work of God

The outward *walk* of the believer begins with the inward WORK of God. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus UNTO good works." The grapevine does not live because it bears fruit; it bears fruit because it lives!

A Living Union with Christ

Our Lord said, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." There is no other door. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me." There is no other way, no other truth, and no other source of eternal life. Everything our God has spiritually and eternally for a sinner is in our Lord Jesus Christ, by our Lord Jesus, and through our Lord Jesus. Acceptance, forgiveness, and salvation are ours by that living union with Christ. He said, "I am the vine, the true vine, you are the branches; abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me." Believers are true branches which have life, joy, grow and bear spiritual fruit only because of their union with the life-giving Vine—Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Fruit of Love

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

I John 4:16

It is the same as if he had said, "We know the love of God for [us by](#) believing." Such knowledge is only attained by faith. The love of God is in Christ (Rom. 8:38-39). No man knows nor can be certain of the love and mercy of God to sinners except as he believes in and knows Christ (Matt. 11:27). We go from faith to love; by faith in Christ, God dwells in us, and God is love. Then, wherever God abides, love will be there. Hence, it follows that he that exercises love to God and to men dwells in God and God in him.

John begins to show the fruit of God's love to us and our love for God; we can dare to stand boldly before God now at the throne of grace (Heb. 10:19) and later at the final judgment. By nature we dread the

presence of God, and justly so, for our sins hold us guilty; therefore, condemnation and hell must come to our minds when we think of God. Natural man has reason to fear and shun the presence of God. But the believer does not fear the Day of Judgment; on the contrary, we approach death and judgment confidently and cheerfully because of his love to us in Christ. As Christ is the Son of God by nature, we are sons of God by adoption. As he is loved by the Father with an everlasting and unchangeable love, so are we loved by him with the same love even while we are in this world (1 John 3:1-2). As he was a man of sorrows, afflicted, tempted, hated and tempted by Satan, so are we! Moreover, as he is now in heaven, so are we representatively in him (Eph. 2:6).

Job Worshipped God

When Job received the news of the death of his children, he rent his clothes (a sign of great sorrow), he shaved his head (a sign of mourning for a long time), then he fell down and worshipped God! He behaved as a human will, and he behaved as a believer will! He behaved as a loving Father, but also as a loving Son of God! "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

The Lord Gave and the Lord Hath Taken Away

Last Sunday I pointed to the fact that when we really believe the above statement and are confident that by the providence, power, and purpose of God "all things work together" for our good and his glory, it keeps us from blaming others, from bitterness, and from depression. With that in mind, I repeat an article.

Good Affliction

*It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn
thy ways.*

Psalm 119:71

God's ways and God's word are best learned by experience and in time of trouble. When our Lord is pleased to lay his hand heavily upon us, we do not soon forget the lessons learned. When the Lord singles out a believer

or a church for special affliction and adversity, it is not for punishment nor lack of love for them; it is for eternal blessings and because he does love them. "Whom the Lord loveth" he chastens, corrects, and teaches! When Job sat before his friends, who was afflicted? The one God loved! When Paul stood before King Agrippa, who wore the chains? The one God loved! Humanly speaking, which path of life would you prefer to live on earth, that of Esau or Jacob? Esau had the life of prosperity and ease; Jacob was full of trouble and conflict, But God loved Jacob!

Thank God He has loved us in Christ and is pleased to teach us his ways by dealing with us in such a way that we are weaned from the world and find our life, comfort, and hope only in him. A person who measures his blessings and relationship with God by his prosperity, health, happiness, and worldly comforts makes a fatal mistake. "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all believers are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons" (Heb. 12:8). Paul said, "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9-10). He who sends the trial for his glory and my good will supply the grace sufficient. Those who know the Redeemer, also know that when we are weak, we are strong; when we are poor, we are rich; when we are empty, we are full; when we die, we live!

Christ Must Have the Preeminence

Christ Jesus is first in all things. He must have the preeminence! He has all authority in heaven and earth. He has the glory before time, in time, and after time. He is the cause of all that's done in this world and in the world to come. When the scripture says, "He is the first fruits of them that rise again" (1 Cor. 15:20), it is saying that God chose Christ and then he chose us. God justified Christ by his resurrection, thereby justifying us because he bore our sins and was numbered with the transgressors. We will rise again because he is risen. Christ ascended and we will ascend. Christ is first loved; we are loved in the Beloved. Christ is first blessed, and we have all spiritual blessings in him. He is the first and the last; Alpha and Omega, the author and finisher of our faith. "All hail the power of Jesus' name!"

T.U.L.I.P.

The old truth preached by Spurgeon, Bunyan, the reformers, and the apostles is the truth that we must preach today or else be liars to our

consciences and to our God. We dare not try to shape truth or smooth away the sharp edges of the doctrines, Mankind is still depraved (totally), God has elected a people, Christ sufficiently and effectually redeemed the elect, the Holy Spirit will call out his sheep through the preaching of the gospel, and all whom he justifies and calls will persevere! Some ministers profess to be sound in grace, but it does not sound like grace when they preach it.

What Is It to Receive Christ?

As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

John 1:12

To receive Christ is to believe on his name. In Isaiah 26:3, to receive Christ is "staying on the Lord." David in the Psalms calls receiving Christ "trusting him!" "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee" (Psalm 9:10). Receiving Christ is leaning on him; and to receive Christ is, indeed, to come to him! "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). The poet wrote,

"I will arise and go to Jesus;
He will embrace me in his arms.
In the arms of my dear Saviour,
Oh, there are ten thousand charms."

They Need the Cold

Ms. E. J. Whately wrote about the introduction of a certain plant into England years ago. When the plants were brought to the gardener, he took for granted that they required warmth; so he put them in the hothouse. Day by day the plants withered a bit more and more, until the gardener threw them out on a compost pile in the cold. There they began to revive and to grow and to bloom. They needed the cold!

The great Husbandman often saves his plants by throwing them out into the cold. The nipping frosts of trial and affliction causes the mind to think on the Lord; new thoughts and feelings are revived! The heart becomes dead to the world and looks up to God. From the night of sorrow rises the joy of morning. "Weeping may endure for the night, but joy

cometh in the morning." Without the night, the joy would not be so welcomed! From the crucifixion of the old man comes the resurrection of the new man.

Suffering, Afflictions, Persecutions

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

2 Timothy 3:12

In the preceding verse Paul speaks of the suffering, afflictions, and persecutions he had endured for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ; and he adds, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." There are no exceptions!

Satan, the world, and especially unsaved professors of religion hate the gospel of free grace and justification by faith alone. Going about to establish a righteousness of their own, they are opposed to the imputed righteousness of Christ and count as their enemies all who preach and believe it. Those who wish to be exempt from persecution must necessarily denounce Christ! (John 15:18-21). All believers shall not be martyrs; but it is absolutely unavoidable that as soon as a true knowledge of grace and a zeal for the person and work of Christ are manifested by a believer, this kindles the rage of Satan and ungodly men. By persecution, slander, murmuring, or some other method, trial will come!

The Will of God in Christ Concerning You

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

2 Thessalonians 5:16-18

It is indeed the will of God that his children rejoice always in him, that we live in an attitude and spirit of prayer and fellowship with him, and that we give thanks in everything which he brings to pass in our lives. What we are, what we have, where we are, and all that takes place in our lives is "the will of God concerning us." Let us "rejoice evermore;" not in things, but in him! "Pray without ceasing," "not in word, but in heart!" "Give thanks," not for something, but everything!

Irresistible Grace

We believe that the work of regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and faith is not an act of man's free will and power, but of the mighty, efficacious, and irresistible grace of God.

Sectarianism

I remember reading something Mr. Spurgeon wrote on this subject. It went something like this:

“I glory in that which in this present day is so much spoken against, sectarianism! I find the word applied to Christians everywhere, no matter what the doctrine or teaching from the scriptures. If a person be in earnest and believes God with his whole heart, he is at once branded a sectarian or bigot or worse. Well, success to sectarianism; let it live and flourish! When people cease to be fervent and firm in their belief of the doctrines and teachings of God's word, farewell to the power of godliness. When preachers and people cease to maintain God's word firmly and strenuously, then truth shall leave the land and error alone shall reign.”

Regeneration and Conversion

Regeneration is God's act; conversion is ours. Regeneration is the implantation of a gracious principle; conversion is the exercise of that principle. Regeneration is never a matter of direct consciousness to the subject of it; conversion always is such to the agent of it. Regeneration is a single act, complete in itself, and never repeated; conversion, as the beginning of holy living, is the commencement of a series; constant, endless and progressive.

The Atonement

Hugh Martin shows in his work on, "The Atonement In Its Relations To The Covenant, The Priesthood, The Intercession Of Our Lord," 1887, the surest way to meet an objection against the alleged injustice of a vicarious atonement (the Innocent dying instead of the guilty) is by setting forth the truth of Christ's covenant-headship and responsibility, and of the covenant-oneness with him of those whose sins he expiates by dying in their stead and room.

Covenant-oneness is the ground of his substitution; and by this fact is the vicariousness of his sacrifice not merely brought to light but vindicated. It is not merely true that he suffers for us; it is also true that we suffer in him. And the latter of these propositions justifies the truth and righteousness of the former. He is substituted for us because he is one with us—identified with us and we with him! Such is the great Biblical truth; Christ was by the decree and gift of the Father united to his people before his incarnation, and it was because of this that he died for them.

The Harmony of Prayer and Preaching

A man may preach, "Sinner, save thyself;" but he dare not pray such foolishness. In prayer it is, "Lord, save me or I perish." A man may preach the free will of men, but he dare not mention such in prayer. In prayer it must be, "Not my will, but thine be done." A man may preach and defend the dignity and righteousness of himself and others; but when he comes to God in prayer, he can only cry with Job, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." A man may exalt the works and deeds of the flesh from the pulpit, for whatever purposes, but not in the prayer closet. There, our only plea is, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."

Men and women may talk in religious circles about when they "decided for Jesus," when they "accepted him as their personal Saviour;" but not in his presence; for there the song is, "Thou art worthy, for thou hast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth."

A Word About the New Birth

Here is a word by an old English theologian on the subject of "The New Birth," which, in this day, is the most misunderstood and misrepresented doctrine of the word of God.

"Sinner, unconverted sinner, I warn thee thou canst never cause thyself to be born again; and though the new birth is absolutely necessary, it is absolutely impossible to thee unless God the Spirit shall do it. Do what you will, and still at your very best there is a division wide as eternity between you and the regenerate man. The Spirit of God must make you new; ye must be born again. The same power which raised Christ Jesus from the dead must be exerted in raising us from the dead.

The very same omnipotence, without which angels or worms could not have had a being, must again step forth out of his privy chamber and do as great a work as he did at the first creation in making us anew in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Christ Ability, Willingness and Love

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

John 6:37

Someone has said that this text with all its jewels of truth is "the best word in the Bible." John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, said, "It is a text for a man to hang his soul upon, since it speaks, not of the people who come, but of the person to whom they come; his ability, his willingness, and his love to those who are afar off and to them who are nigh."

Images of Corruption

And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

Romans 1:23

All of these things are prevalent today as symbols, signs, and reminders of God and religion. Pictures of a man called Jesus, pictures and statues of saints, crosses, doves of peace flying in front of flames of fire, Easter bunnies, chickens, egg hunts, and bumper stickers of a fish to indicate that the driver is a Christian.

The glory of our God, essential to himself, cannot, is not, and must not be reduced to such images and idols. "But," we are reminded, "these are not idols; these are symbols and signs to remind us of God and spiritual things."

They are idols! and if permitted or encouraged, with the passing of time, these symbols (like Moses' serpent of brass in 2 Kings 18:4) become more prominent and important than what they are supposed to represent.

The Lord gave us the bread and wine to remember his body and blood given for us. But these elements once eaten and drunk are gone and we see not them, but him. The Lord gave us the ordinance of baptism and "All of us who have been baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death;

therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death" (Romans 6:3-4). And having confessed our Lord in believer's baptism, we are done with the water and we live by faith upon him. "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry" (1 Cor. 10:14).

The Lord's Table

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Paul sets forth the Lord's Table as it should be observed by the Lord's church.

1. He tells how he came by the knowledge of it—by revelation from Christ.
2. He sets forth the author of it—the Lord Jesus himself.
3. He gives the time of the institution—the same night he was betrayed and arrested.
4. He lists the materials of the supper—bread and wine (Luke 22:14-20).

The bread represented his body, broken, and the wine his blood, which was shed for us. Nothing is said of the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation. The bread and wine do not actually become the body and blood of the Lord, but only represent or symbolize his body and blood. "This do in remembrance of me," said our Lord, in order to keep fresh in our minds and hearts his sacrifice for our sins and his intercession now on our behalf. We not only remember his death for us, but we "show," declare, or proclaim his substitutionary work (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Be Ready to Give an Answer

Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

1 Peter 3:15

When a person asks you to tell him why you believe that your sins are pardoned, why you believe that your name is in the book of the Lamb, and why you believe that you are not under condemnation but hope to reign eternally with Christ, be ready to give him a scriptural answer! It is because the Lord Jesus Christ is your righteousness before the law, and the Lord Jesus is your justifier by his precious blood, and the Lord Jesus is your great High Priest and Mediator before God's throne, who ever lives to

make intercession for you! And give that answer in a humble manner, for we are what we are only by the grace and mercy of our God. Give that answer with the "fear of the Lord," being careful that he receives all the glory for your state and blessings. Give that answer courteously and respectfully; it may be that the person who asks is not an enemy of grace but a true seeker of our Lord.

Beware of Idols

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols," wrote John, the Apostle. Keep yourselves from anyone and anything that would occupy the place in your heart due to God. Keep yourselves from traditions, superstitions, images, and religious ordinances and rituals introduced by others calling themselves Christians, if their practices and teachings are not according to the scriptures and not glorifying to our Lord!

The Greatest Blessing

An old timer wrote: "My friend, you may think to live very well without Christ, but death will be unbearable without him. You are confident and secure at present, but death will destroy your confidence. Your tree is fair and strong now; but when the wind comes, if your root is not in the Rock of Ages, down your tree must come forever. You may think these worldly pleasures and ways of flesh are so good; but when your years increase and you reach the bottom of this poisoned bowl, they will be as bitter as wormwood; and worse than gall shall be the daintiest of your drinks."

When I read this, I gave thanks to our Lord for delivering us from "this body of death through our Lord Jesus Christ," and old age and death are no longer to be feared but desired; that death is no longer the loss of life and joy, but the gain of eternal life and glory. While we mourn the temporary absence of our dear loved ones whom the Lord has been pleased to take to glory, we do not sorrow as those who have no hope; for we know, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his people" (Psa. 116:15), and leaving this world and going to be with Christ is the greatest blessing of all the blessings!

A Living Hope

1 Peter 1:3

Our hope is called "a living hope" because it is based not on dead works, but our hope is in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ever lives to make intercession for us. Our hope is incorruptible; neither moth, nor rust, nor decay, nor years have any effect on it. It fadeth not away as do the world and its fashion. It is reserved in heaven for you; it awaits your coming.

Justification by His Work

The ground of justification is not our own merit, nor faith, nor evangelical obedience, nor the work of Christ in us but his work for us; that is, his obedience unto death! (Phil. 2:8).

Divorce and Marriage

And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife (but and if he put her away, let him remain unmarried, or be reconciled to his wife).

1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Divorce and remarriage have become the accepted practice in our country. But it is not now and has never been condoned nor accepted among believers! Neither husband nor wife is at liberty to separate from nor cast aside the other. Our marriage vows are unto God, and they are not to be taken lightly. When believers divorce, they declare to the world, "The God and gospel we preach is not sufficient to enable us to love one another more than we love ourselves, to enable us to deny our desires and flesh for the sake of our homes and our children, to consider the reproach our divorce will bring upon our church and its fellowship!" One question remains: If our command is, "Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31), can you cast aside your wife and children for the glory of God? Or is God's glory better served by being faithful unto death?

Faith Rest Only Upon Christ

The Lord Jesus rejects that faith which does not center in him only and rest the heart entirely on him! He welcomes no partner and will admit none. He would not be worthy of the name of Saviour if salvation were not wholly from him. Hear what he says of himself, "I have trodden the winepress alone: I looked and there was none to help: therefore mine own arm brought salvation" (Isa. 3:3,5). Again, "Behold! the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule; He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm; and he shall carry them in his bosom" (Isa. 40:10,11).

"All that I was, my sin, my guilt,
My death, was all my own;
All that I am, I owe to Christ,
My gracious God, alone."

The Spirit Helpeth Our Infirmities

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.

Romans 8:26

We are not ignorant of the *object* of prayer—our God and Father!

We are not ignorant of the *way* of coming to God—in Christ!

We are not ignorant of the *manner* of prayer—in sincerity, reverence, seeking his will and glory.

We are not ignorant of *whom* we should pray for—ourselves, our family, friends, ministers, all saints and our enemies.

We are not ignorant of the things *spiritual* for which we should pray forgiveness, grace, strength, wisdom, understanding, his presence, and an increase of faith.

But the area in which "we know not what we should pray for as we ought" is the physical, material, and with respect to things temporal and related to this flesh.

1. *Possessions*; am I better off with them or without them?
2. *Afflictions*; should I be healed or depart to be with Christ?
3. *Trials*; should I pray for them to be removed or wait the results?
4. Our *children* and their life's work, locations, marriages?

Thankfully, "The Spirit of God himself maketh intercession for us in these things, with groanings which cannot be uttered according to the will of God!"

Johnathan Edwards

Pastor Jonathan Edwards died as a result of being vaccinated against smallpox. He was 54 years old. He left his wife, Sarah, and ten children. When news of his death came to his wife, she wrote to her daughter this brief word.

"What shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. Oh that we may kiss the rod, and lay our hands upon our mouths! The Lord has done it. He has made us adore his goodness, that we had him so long. But my God lives; and he has my heart. Oh what a legacy my husband, and your father, has left us! We are all given to God, and there I am, and love to be."

No Greater Joy

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

3 John 4

Nothing makes me happier than to hear that those to whom I have preached the gospel, and to whom I have been the means of God to bring them to a knowledge of Christ, are believing him and walking in truth. We can give no better gift to our friends, nor greater inheritance to our families, than to preach the gospel to them. They can bring no greater joy and satisfaction to our hearts than to receive Christ, his word and walk therein.

Growing in Grace

The Lord God, in his sovereign will, gives us all that we have. "Without him we can do nothing." A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. The higher a man grows in the grace of God, the lower he will be in his own eyes. A man who has been introduced to what really happened in the Garden of Eden and what really happened on the cross of Calvary will have no problem with pride and arrogance. Apart from the

mercy and grace of God, he knows where he could be and what he could be! "I am what I am by the grace of God."

The Weakness of Our Faith

A friend complained to Pastor Gotthold of the weakness of his faith and the distress this gave him. Pastor Gotthold pointed to a vine which had twined itself around a pole and was hanging loaded with beautiful fruit, and said, "Frail indeed is that plant; but what harm is done to it by its frailty, as long as it is supported by such a strong pole. The weakness of your faith matters little provided only it is sincere and is in our Lord Jesus Christ alone. Faith is the work and gift of God, and he bestows it in such measure as he wills and determines right. Let the measure of your faith, which he has given you, be deemed sufficient by you and take for pole and prop and support and strength the Lord Jesus Christ, his blood and righteousness and his precious promises. Twine around these with complete trust. A heart sensible of its weakness and prostrating itself continually at his feet is more acceptable than that which presumes upon the strength of its faith and falls into false security and pride."

The Good News

When the time appointed by the Father was fulfilled, he sent his Son, The Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, into the world (Gal. 4:4).

1. Made of a woman; not created as Adam or begotten of man as all are other men but conceived by the Holy Spirit in a virgin's womb. He was made flesh, and he identified with us in every respect.

2. Made under the law; under the civil and judicial law as a Jew, under the ceremonial law as a son of Abraham, and under the moral law as a man and the Surety of his people.

2. To redeem them; by meeting and obeying the law in every jot and tittle. By going to the cross and suffering the penalty of our sins, Christ purchased our freedom, redeemed us from the curse of the law, and satisfied the justice of God that we might receive the power and privilege of sons of God (John 1:12 - 13; Gal. 3:13).

Three Wonders in Glory

John Newton wrote: "When I stand in glory, I shall see three wonders there; the first will be to see people there whom I did not expect to see; the second wonder will be to see people whom I did expect to see; and the third and greatest wonder of all will be to find myself in the presence and image of our Lord Jesus." Perhaps it would do well for us to consider these words of Mr. Newton when we are tempted to question the salvation of someone who does not see all things as we see them.

He Is the Propitiation for Our Sins

And Christ Jesus is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:2

Propitiation means, "to cover, to atone for, to pardon and reconcile." In order that the wrath of God be appeased, God's justice satisfied, and his holiness honored, so that he can forgive our sins consistent with his righteousness and justice; Christ died for us! He is the *propitiation* (the covering, atonement, sin-offering, and reconciler), not just for the Jew, but for Jew and Gentile; not just for that generation, but for believers of every generation; not just for those who read this epistle, but for every believer throughout the whole world who believes that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has come in the flesh. Our Lord has a people out of every tribe, tongue and nation; and he is the Advocate, Mediator, and propitiation for them all; but he is neither the Saviour nor the propitiation for those who do not believe! He said in John 17:9, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them."

Christ Is Our Victory Over Sin

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 5:5

Who has the victory? Who has this confidence and assurance? Who has this eternal life and deliverance? No one but the person who believes in, receives and trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is seeing the Son in the

glory, fullness and suitability of his person, office and grace; going to him, trusting him and living upon him. This shows that the victory over the world is not owing to the faith itself, but to its object, Christ, who has overcome it and made us conquerors in him.

Paul Rebuked Peter

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed; he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel.

Galatians 2:11, 14

Here is a younger apostle rebuking an older apostle before the entire body of Christ. You who are familiar with this incident will learn several valuable lessons.

1. Even great leaders (who are still men) are liable to make great mistakes.
2. Paul rebuked Peter before them all because, to keep the truth of justification by faith is more important than to keep the peace.
3. There is no doctrine about which we ought to be more zealous and set for its defense as, "How God can be just and justifier."
4. A man is not to be believed and followed because he is old and experienced, or because he holds a high office in the church, or because he is well-taught and gifted as a preacher.

Peter had all of these credentials! But he erred when he implied by his action that the works of the law have a part in our justification before God. Peter did not actually say this, but his actions certainly indicated he had a problem with it.

God Is Glorified

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus; that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God.

Romans 15:5-6

God is glorified when the perfections of his nature are recognized. God is glorified when the work of his creation, providence and salvation is praised. God is glorified when the gospel of his grace in Christ is believed; his beloved Son is received, loved, worshipped, and exalted. God is

glorified when his people obey his word, love one another, and "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things."

When our children are obedient, behave in public, and conduct themselves properly, we are pleased and feel that they have honored their parents; but when our children misbehave, we are displeased and feel that they have not honored us! So "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

What the Redeemer Has Done

Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Romans 15:7

When I have forgiven and forgotten every offense or wrong that I have experienced or imagined; when I have borne every hard word, act or thought; when I have overlooked, excused, and disregarded every weakness and fall or infirmity I see in others; when I have tried to understand and sympathize with those who are weak; if it were possible, I would still not have borne, endured, nor forgiven one fraction of what the Redeemer has borne, endured, and forgiven in me!

Pure Milk of The Word

Have you heard the story of the Irishman who was converted to Christ and whose priest told him that he had no business trying to read the Bible because he was unlearned. The priest said, "I will get the milk from the Word of God and I will bring it to you;" to which the Irishman replied. "I will be much obliged to you, sir, if you bring me the milk of the word; but I intend to keep a cow myself. That way I will be sure that the milk I get is pure."

This is what I want us to do; keep a cow yourself; carry a Bible with you and determine if the milk you receive from the pulpit is pure! You can trust your body to a physician, your finances to a broker, and not suffer too great a loss if they are wrong. But to trust your eternal soul to a priest or a preacher and find in the end that his was "another gospel" is to lose everything eternally.

A Word to Young People

*Children, [young people] obey your parents in all things:
for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*

Colossians 3:20

Do you want to be a happy young person? Do you want the Lord's blessing in your life? Do you desire to live for the glory of God? Then obey your parents! Honor and respect your father and mother. Respect them and their counsel and decisions. Speak respectfully of them and to them, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

The Love of Christ

*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us,
and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

1 John 4:10

The Love of Christ is the *bond* which holds the different stones together in the temple of God.

The Love of Christ is the *fence* which keeps away from us the wolves of division and discord.

The Love of Christ is the *musical score* which enables all of the different voices and instruments to play and sing in harmony for his glory.

The Love of Christ is the *cloak* which covers a multitude of infirmities, faults, and failures and enables us to, "forgive one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us."

The Name of The Lord

They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.

Psalm 9:10

Our Lord is known by his sevenfold name in the scriptures:

Jehovah-Jireh, the Provider for all their necessities (Gen 22:14).

Jehovah-Rophi, the Healer of all their diseases (Exo. 15:26).

Jehovah-Nissi, their Banner and Security in danger (Exo. 17:15).

Jehovah-Shalom, their Peace in the midst of conflict (Judges 6:24).

Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord their Righteousness (Jer. 23:6)

Jehovah-Shamman, the Lord is there. (Ezek. 48:35).

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan for the Year 2003

Prayer

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Colossians 4:2

There are three important things mentioned here in regard to our prayers.

1. "*Continue in prayer.*" This does not mean that we should pray all the time. That would be impossible. We can and ought to live in an attitude of prayer and fellowship with God. This does mean to pray frequently about all things. A day should not pass without prayer.
2. "*Watch in prayer.*" Be alert and intent in prayer. This is said in opposition to cold, formal, and careless praying (which God despises). When we pray, let it be an undivided, sincere communion with the living God.
3. "*With thanksgiving*" (Phil. 4:6). A believer always has mercies for which to be thankful. How shall we succeed in our present request if we are not thankful for what has gone before?

The Difference in Law and Love

"For brethren, you have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another"

Galatians 5:13

Under Moses' law circumcision was an outward sign in the flesh that a man was of the tribe of Israel. But our Lord said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples—if you love one another." This is inward circumcision of the heart.

Under Moses' law a Sabbath Day was set apart for required worship, otherwise most of these people would never have worshipped at all. Our Lord declared, "God is Spirit and they who truly worship God, worship him in spirit and truth. For the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Under Moses' law, a tithe was required of everyone in Israel to support the priesthood, Levites, and the poor; otherwise we know that these people would not have given. But the scriptures say, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Israel obeyed the law out of fear lest they be stoned! Believers obey God because they love him, they love his law, and they love one another. "By love serve one another."

A Preacher's Prayer

In my sermons to you I have nothing to offer and no invitation to make. It is mine to preach to you the Lord Jesus Christ as I know and feel him to be precious to my own soul, and to the hearts of all his eternally-loved and blood-bought people, begging the Spirit of God to open the heart, give you eyes to see, ears to hear and a heart to understand that glorious gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Joseph Irons wrote:

“Tis by divine anointing,
Ransomed sinners know the Lord;
Gospel truths to Christ Jesus pointing,
Rest upon the preached word!”

So, my dear friends and assembled hearers, “I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

They Are Not Sinners

Do you sometimes wonder why your relatives, who love you and enjoy your company, have no interest in your gospel, your church or your testimony? They are not sinners! They need no mediator with God!

Do you wonder why your co-workers enjoy talking about religion, denominations, churches and even freedom, but they have no interest or

desire to talk about Christ and salvation? They are not sinners! They need no Saviour!

Do you wonder why old people are all religious and talk about going to heaven, meeting their loved ones and living without pain or death! Yet, they never mention Christ and his sacrifice for sin by which we have the hope of life? They are not sinners! They are all good people now!

Do you wonder why most religious people (even preachers) never raise the question, "How can man be just with God?" "How can a holy God forgive and receive an unholy sinner and still be holy and just?" They are not sinners! They do not need a righteousness; they have one of their own.

Do you wonder why most preachers do not preach salvation by grace alone, Christ alone, through his blood and righteousness alone? They are not sinners! Only sinners need apply for such great mercy and grace! Great sinners need a great Saviour!

Who Maketh Thee to Differ?

Dr. James M. Gray wrote this: "Suffer a sinner whose heart overflows, loving his Saviour to tell what he knows; once more to tell it would I embrace." What do you want to tell, Dr. Gray? "I'm only a sinner saved by grace." A man who really knows God never graduates above that statement right there; "I'm only a sinner saved by grace." He may grow in grace, grow in talent, grow in gifts and grow in knowledge, but he's still only a sinner saved by grace.

We have nothing to glory of, we're just using borrowed gifts. "Who maketh thee to differ? " (1 Cor 4:7). Are you able to preach, who gave you the power? Do you have a little more than somebody else, who gave it to you? Do you have more talents than the next fellow, who made you to differ? "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if you received it, why dost thou glory?" Why do you glory in your beauty? God gave it to you. Why do you glory in your strength? Without God you would not have it. Why do you glory in your wealth? God gave it to you. Why do you glory in your talent, in your singing ability?

Let me tell you a story. Charles Spurgeon wrote this in 1855. "Last week the quiet neighborhood of Newton was disturbed by an occurrence which has thrown a gloom over the whole neighborhood. Something dreadful happened. A well-known teacher, a man who had been a principal of the academy for young men for years, who was my own professor, has become mentally deranged; he has lost his mind. A warrant

had to be issued for his arrest, and while waiting for the vehicle to carry him away to the institution for the mentally insane, this old white-haired man, who had been a principal, stood on the porch at his home where he had lived all his life before his friends and neighbors, handcuffed to two policemen. He was then led away. He was my teacher; he was the man from whom I learned whatever human learning I have acquired. He was a man of genius, a man of ability! How fallen, how fallen." How quickly can human nature sink below the level of the beast.

Somebody Touched Me

When the woman with the issue of blood came behind our Lord and touched the border of his garment, the scripture says, "Immediately her issue of blood ceased." The Lord Jesus said, "Who touched me." Peter replied, "Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, who touched me?" The Lord said, "Somebody touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me."

Can you tell me why when the multitude touched his hands and clothes that nothing happened, yet when this woman (who had heard of the Lord Jesus and who said in her heart, "If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole!") touched him, He immediately said, "Who touched me?" Here are the reasons:

1. Hers was the touch of *need*! Her disease was fatal; death was in the blood and the nature, and she knew it.
2. Hers was the touch of *desperation* and *inability*; nothing and no one could help her. Human failure drove her to him.
3. Hers was a touch of *faith*. Her confidence was born of what she heard of him! "If I can but touch his clothes, I shall be healed."
4. Hers was a touch of *assurance*! "I said not to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain; look unto me and be ye saved, for I am God and there is none else."

Baptized

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Romans. 6:3

First, we were baptized into Christ. This is not an ordinance or a figure but an actual experience. In regeneration and redemption, we are baptized into the body of Christ by the Spirit of God. He is the head of the body which is his church.

Secondly, we are baptized in water. What is the meaning of this ordinance? We are publicly confessing that we are identified with Christ Jesus in his obedience, death, burial, and resurrection, by which he redeemed and reconciled us to God. We are dead to this world, this life; it is buried, and we rise to walk as new creatures with new hearts and a new life! The nature of baptism is a burial of the old; and the end of baptism is a resurrection of the new!

Paul's Prayer for The Church

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.

Ephesians 1:17-19

Verse 17; “That God may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” These people already knew the Lord, as was indicated by their faith in him; but this is a prayer for the increase of that knowledge. This knowledge of Christ and its increase can only come by and through the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Verse 18; “That the eyes of your understanding may be flooded with light and understanding” that you might see (1) the sinfulness of sin, (2) the insufficiency of your own righteousness, and (3) the beauty, glory and suitableness of Christ as Redeemer and Lord. The natural man, being in

darkness, neither sees nor understands these mysteries. We need a better view of them.

Verse 18; "That you may know what is the hope of his calling." By which is meant either (1) the hope of external happiness, (2) Christ, who is our hope, (3) the grace of hope, which is an exercise of faith, or (4) all three! For the hope of eternal glory is founded on Christ, and the grace of hope lives only in the heart where Christ dwells! As we know more of Christ, we know more of the hope of his calling.

Verse 18; "That ye may know the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." The elect are the Lord's portion and inheritance, in whom he is glorified and will be glorified. This seems to be speaking of the heavenly inheritance which the Lord is preparing for us. Paul said there are no words to describe it.

Verse 19; "That you may know the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe." This is the power of God in our conversion and faith, the power that regenerated us, begat us, raised us from the dead, and formed Christ in us.

What God Does is Forever

I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever.

Ecclesiastes 3:14

The world with its temporary joys, trials, pleasures, and sorrows shall all pass away; but God will make a new heaven and a new earth which shall be forever.

The covenant of works has failed and is perished. Man is hopelessly dead in sin, failure, and condemnation. But our God has made an everlasting covenant of grace in Christ, ordered in all things and sure, by which He will bring many sons to eternal glory, which shall be forever.

This body of flesh will grow older, weaker, and die; but God has redeemed us body and soul; and in Christ our vile bodies shall be changed into his likeness, and we shall live forever.

This family of believers shall all be called away from the earth one by one; but God will one day gather us all together in Christ, and we will never again say goodbye! His kingdom is forever.

Even our faith, hope, and love are so imperfect and affected by all that is in us and around us; but God will give faith fulfillment, turn hope into reality, and make love perfect! "Nothing can be put to it," for it is all complete and finished in Christ. "Nothing can be taken away from it," for

God is in it, and it is all in him who is Almighty, who said, "I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isa. 46:11). "And God doeth it that men should fear, worship, and trust him."

Why should we not fear, worship, and trust him? To whom shall we go? He has the words of eternal life!

The Reason of God's Love

Sometimes the gospel of grace appears to be at a very low ebb and the believers so few, as in the case of Elijah. But while the elect of God are but a few compared to the mass of false professors and worldlings, yet we were not loved nor chosen because we are many; and we will not be rejected because we are few! The reason he loved us is found not in us, but in him; and he keeps us for the same reason!

What Good News

Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 5:6

This is the sum and substance of our gospel and is the great article of faith. Who died? Christ, the only begotten, well-beloved Son of God in human flesh. How did he die? A death of shame under the wrath of God, bearing our sins. Why did he die? He died for, in the stead of, and as the substitute for all of God's elect in order that God might be just and the justifier of those who believe in him. For whom did he die? "For the ungodly" not for righteous men, nor religious men, nor deserving men, but for those who are ungodly in nature and practice. When did he die? When we were without strength to obey him or to keep his law and without ability to help ourselves. He died "in due time," at the time appointed by the Father. What good news!

The Command

The command. "Look unto me and be ye saved," is not only the hope and strength of the seeking sinner, but it is the constant hope and strength of the believing sinner. I know my sins, but I rejoice in his grace. I know my weakness, but I rest in his strength. I know my emptiness, but I am complete in him.

Wars

And when you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end is not yet.

Mark 13:7

I recently saw a sign held by one of the war protesters in Washington which read; "Wars Never Solve Anything." Wars are terrible and bring sorrow and grief to many, but there will always be "wars and rumors of wars" as long as evil dwells on this earth. But, it is not true that wars accomplish nothing; wars have accomplished good things!

1. A war had to be fought to give America deliverance from England and establish this free nation—1770.
2. A war had to be fought to rid this nation of slavery and keep the union of states together—1865.
3. WWI was necessary to put down Germany's first attempt to control the world—1918.
4. WWII was necessary to destroy Hitler, Nazism, and Imperial Japan—1940.
5. Dessert Storm was essential and so is this war to destroy the evil of Saddam, and if our Lord does not return, there will be another war after this one!!

Forbearing and Forgiving

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you so also do ye.

Colossians 3:13

As long as we are in this flesh, we will have misunderstandings, unpleasantness, and even injustices (at least we feel that our rights have been compromised and others have been wrong in what they have said or done). What is to be our attitude? What are we to do? It is ours to "forbear and forgive." To forbear is to control our emotions, to put down wrath, and even to surrender our rights for the time being in patient hope that the Lord will reveal and accomplish his will and purpose in the matter! It is to "wait on the Lord." To forbear is to refrain from doing or saying anything! To forgive is actually to put the problem or misunderstanding out of mind

and to restore a state of love and fellowship, "even as Christ forgave you." This is the way our Lord treats us! He forbears! He is patient, longsuffering, and kind, and he forgives our sins (all of them) and remembers them no more!

Love

*Teach me, Lord, on earth to show
By my love, how much I owe.*

C.H. Mackintosh wrote, "Nothing ever brought out the real state of man's heart toward God and his hatred and unbelief like the coming of Jesus Christ. 'If I had not come and spoken to them,' said our Lord, 'they had not had sin.' It is not that they would not have been sinners. No! But if He had not come in his incarnation, in fulfillment of all the law and prophets, with undeniable proof of his person, they would not be under such strong judgment for their particular sin of unbelief: but he has come, and their evil is exposed, and they have no excuse nor covering. God came near to man in the person of his Son, and man said. 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him.' Hence, they have no cloak for their sin. It is against light, and it is willful unbelief. Christ said, 'If you were blind, you should have no sin: but now you say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth' (John 9:41). A man who is blind and knows it can have his eyes opened; but what can be done for one who thinks he sees when he really does not see?"

Mackintosh continued, "Confessed blindness is not the difficulty, but professed sight. The permanence of unbelief is connected with the mere profession to see. Those who say, 'We are not blind; we be not sinners,' deny and reject the revelation of God in Christ, and for such evil there is no remedy! To find a blind Bartimaeus who will cry, 'Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me O Lord, that I might see.'"

Sons of Jacob

*For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob
are not consumed.*

Matthew 3:6

Believers are often called "sons of Jacob." I believe I can give several reasons why they are called the sons of Jacob.

The Lord *loved* Jacob. "Jacob have I loved." The reason was not found in Jacob but in the Lord. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and gave his Son to be our substitute.

The Lord *chose* Jacob. "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself" (Psa. 135:4). Has he not also chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world?

The Lord *revealed himself* to Jacob at Bethel. Jacob was running away, but God met him at Bethel (the house of God) and revealed to him his grace and mercy in Christ. Thank God, he crossed our paths and revealed his gospel to us.

The Lord gave Jacob a *new name*. "Thy name shall be no more Jacob (cheat) but Israel (a prince or son of God)." Beloved now, by his grace, we are sons of God! We have a new name and a new family.

The Lord *led* Jacob all the days of his life. "I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Do we not have the same promise? He that has begun in you a good work will finish it in the day of Christ (Phil. 1:6).

Some Things Concerning Salvation

Divine sovereignty without human responsibility leads men to fatalism and indifference. "Who can resist his will? Then why blame me for sinning?" (Rom. 9:18-19).

Human responsibility without divine intervention leads men to despair and helplessness. "How then can man be just with God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman" (Job 25:4)?

Sovereign election without means and the response of repentance and faith leads men to idleness and an unjust view of God. "I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, so I did nothing" (Matt 25:24).

Human effort and means without divine purpose leads men to pride and self-righteousness. "Being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness" (Rom. 10:3).

The kingdom of Christ or the reign of Christ on earth without the reign of Christ in the heart leads me to seek rewards, position, and self-glory. "Grant that my sons may sit one on thy right hand and one on thy left in thy kingdom" (Matt. 20:21).

Religious activities and even outstanding gifts and services without the love for Christ and others lead men to empty service and worthless

sacrifice. "Though I bestow my goods to feed the poor and my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. 13:3).

Spirit without truth is wildfire; truth without Spirit is dead orthodoxy. Grace without obedience is disgrace; obedience without grace is hypocrisy.

To the Praise of The Glory of His Grace

Paul deals with the means of salvation, as they were purchased and accomplished by Christ in the work of redemption.

Christ redeemed us by his blood. We were in bondage to sin, the law and justice (Gal. 3:10). The law of God is honored by his obedience and the justice of God is satisfied by his death; and we have full and complete forgiveness (Rom. 3:19-26).

Christ enlightened us as to the mystery of his gospel of redemption. The gospel is a hidden mystery to the natural man, Jew and Gentile (Col. 1:26; Rom. 16:25, 26; 1 Cor. 2:7-10). In Christ we see both the wisdom and the power of God in redemption. This he reveals when he pleases and to whom he pleases, that in his own time elect angels and elect men will be brought together under one Head (Col. 1:16-18).

Christ enriched us. In Christ we were made God's children and we obtained that glorious inheritance of all things (Rom. 8:16,17).

Christ our Redeemer has done all of this for the eternal praise of his glorious grace (1 Cor. 1:30, 31).

John Rippon – Example of Grace

John Gill was pastor of New Park Street Baptist Church for 51 years. The mighty commentator having been followed to his grave by his grieving people and a great company of ministers, his church began to look for a successor. There was trouble in store, for there was division of opinion. Some, no doubt as true "Gillites," looked for an older preacher, sound in doctrine, who would supply the older members with spiritual food, while another party had an eye to the, growth of the church and the younger members of their families. John Rippon was recommended to them. He was only twenty years old, but they agreed to hear him on probation. The older members judged him to be too young and too flighty; they even accused him of having gone up the pulpit stairs two steps at a time on some occasion when he was in a hurry; a grave offense for which the condemnation could hardly be too severe. He was only a young man and

came from an academy, and this alone was enough to make the sounder and older members afraid of him. He preached for some months on probation, and finally forty members left the church because they could not agree to call John Rippon to be their pastor.

Rippon modestly expressed his amazement and wonder that even more people had not been dissatisfied. He said his great surprise was that so large a number had agreed to call him to the pastorate. In the spirit of love and forbearance John Rippon proposed to the church that, as these friends had left the church, they should lovingly be dismissed with prayer and God-speed, and that, as a token of brotherly love, the church should assist them in building a meeting-house of their own. A vote was taken and the sum of three-hundred pounds was given to the departing members who rejected Mr. Rippon's ministry and left the church. The new group set out to find a pastor and finally called Mr. William Burton, who was nineteen years of age, two years younger than John Rippon. Who do you suppose took part in the ordination and installation service for the very young pastor and his new congregation? John Rippon!

John Rippon remained as pastor of New Park Street for sixty-three years, and Mr. Burton labored among the new church for over forty years.

Sinners Will Not Come

You shall seek and find me, when you search for me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:13

Men do not perish, because they cannot come to Christ, but because they will not come to Christ Jesus. Our Lord said, "You will not come to me, that you may have life" (John 5:40). Man's ruin lies completely in his perverse will! Is this not true? He cannot come to the only Saviour who can relieve his fallen condition, because he will not come! Help enough is provided, "For he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25).

Again, the Lord cried saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink" (John 7:37). This is the condemnation, men love darkness rather than life, and men perish, not because they cannot come to the fountain of life, but because they will not come! Salvation is of the grace of Christ alone, and condemnation is wholly of ourselves. Man's heart will

not submit to be wholly saved by grace through faith and he will not receive the Lord Jesus Christ as his only Prophet, Priest, and King.

The Doctrine of Christ

'Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ.

2 John 1:19

Not the law of God, of which everyone is a transgressor daily in thought, word and deed, but the person who denies the doctrine of Christ the Messiah, has not, knows not, and believes not God.

The “doctrine of Christ” concerns:

1. His person as the Son of God, as truly God, and the union of the two natures; divine and human in one person.
2. His offices as Mediator, Surety, Prophet, Priest and King.
3. His redemptive work, His obedience, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension.
4. His return to judge and to reign.

This is the doctrine of King Messiah, the doctrine of redemption and eternal glory. The man who abides in the truth of Christ has both the Father and the Son. He has an interest in them and a knowledge of them (John 17:3; 1 John 5:11-13).

If there comes to your church or your home (under the character of a preacher, teacher, or a religious leader) one who does not preach this doctrine but despises and denies it, do not allow him to preach in the house of God and do not entertain him in your home (Rom. 16:17; Gal. 1:8,9).

“Neither bid him God speed.” Do not give the false teacher the usual civil form of salutation as “Good day, all hail, health and prosperity” or “God bless you.” Do not encourage him or give the impression that you are sympathetic with him, for it could mislead others to think favorably of him.

Blessed Is the Man

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Psalm 1:1

"That walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." What is the counsel of the ungodly? It is the so-called wisdom of the world. It is the opinions and philosophy of natural man. This blessed man does not listen to their counsel, nor agree with, nor act according to what these "wise men" think. Peer pressure is no problem for him.

"He does not stand in the way of evil men." The way of sinners is the way of self, pride, materialism, and the way of death. "There is a way that seems right to the natural man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes but the Lord weighs and tries the heart" (Prov. 21:2).

"He does not sit in the seat of the scornful." You meet the scornful every day; the news media, the world of entertainment, the intellectuals, the sarcastic in-your-face crowd. They are not teachable and are seated in the seat of the scornful. How does a person come to be so hardened as to sit in the seat of the scornful?

1. First he walks with them, listens to them, keeps company with them, and then...
2. He stops and listens to their so-called wisdom, opinions, and philosophy and is impressed, and then...
3. He sits down with them and becomes as evil and perverted as they are, and perishes in the way.

"But our delight is in the law of the Lord and in his word do we meditate day and night." Oh! "Blessed is the man."

Adorn the Doctrine

When believers walk in truth and love, when they adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, with generous, gracious, and exemplary lives and behavior, they glorify God (Matt. 5:16). The fruits of righteousness, by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, displayed by a believer, not only glorify the power, grace, and mercy of God in them but cause others to glorify God. 'So shall ye be my disciples.' Our fruitfulness does not make us disciples of Christ but is proof and evidence that we are his disciples. Good fruit

does not make a tree good; the tree is first good, and the fruit is evidence that the tree is good.

Nehushtan – A Worthless Piece of Brass

2 Kings 18:1-8

I can understand a person's interest in that brazen serpent. It would be extremely interesting to see the serpent which Moses made and lifted up. Our God used that serpent as a type of a crucified Redeemer (the Lord Jesus himself referred to it) and on that occasion healed all who looked to it. It would be interesting to see the rod of Moses, the tables of the law, the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, and the smitten rock. But interesting is all it would be, certainly not inspirational, nor edifying, nor of any spiritual value, nor of any consequence where our relationship with God is concerned.

In the worship of God, Christ is all (John 14:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 1:12-20; 2:9-10). Believers believe, love, and worship God in Spirit, not in form, rituals, nor with visual aids. They rejoice only in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). True believers have no superstitions regarding days, hallowed places, religious relics, symbols and signs, nor ancestors (Phil. 3:4-10). Christ is our Sabbath, our sin offering, our High Priest, our altar, our mediator, our Prophet, Priest, and King. By his blood we ourselves are made kings and priests to our God. We bow before no man, make pilgrimages to no place on earth (our God is everywhere), carry no religious symbols, and place no merit whatsoever in religious holidays such as Christmas and Easter. The Lord has given his church two ordinances to observe until he returns, baptism and the Lord's Table. In baptism believers confess faith in Christ alone and identify publicly with him in his death, burial, and resurrection. In observing the Lord's Table with the simple elements of bread and wine we show forth his death until he comes.

I am confident that the religious, superstitious Israelites were shocked when King Hezekiah destroyed the brazen serpent which Moses had made, called it a "piece of brass" and declared it to be of no value in the worship of God. But if we could find the actual cross on which Christ died, it would serve no purpose and must be called a "piece of wood." The grave in which Christ lay is but "a hole in the ground," and the winding sheet in which he was wrapped is but a "piece of cloth." Idolatry is such a subtle thing of Satan and must be avoided at all costs. God is a jealous

God and will not share his glory nor the worship and affection of his people. We trust, rest in, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and abhor any effort to rob him of his pre-eminence.

Be Not Fearful of Death

Our Lord has been pleased to call away to glory several of our dear people. No words of mine can make these trials easier, dry your tears, nor dispel your loneliness; but perhaps I can remind you of some things which we all believe and know, and these truths can serve as a foundation of comfort.

Our loved ones are with Christ in glory! They would not return to this world, even if they could.

Our loved ones are now perfect in body and soul. They have no more sin, no more pain, no tears, no sorrow. They are fully complete and satisfied with his likeness.

Our loved ones have no unpleasant memories nor even thoughts about life on this earth. "For the former things are passed away and God makes all things new!" No regrets, no remorse in glory, no memory of unhappiness.

Our loved ones would not have you grieve for them, but rather rejoice in their graduation and victory! To die is gain and glory. Their trials and tribulations are over!

There is no time in glory. Days and years have only to do with us, not them. My son did not go to glory 34 years ago, nor my daughter 8 years ago; they went there today! It is always today, now in his presence; we will go there today.

Our loved ones are away for the present! And while memories of them are sweet and will linger all our lives on earth, we speak of them often! Yet, we have a life to live, our God to glorify, and others to love, serve, and encourage. We cannot do this and live in the past. Paul said, "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before." I cannot change what is over, but I can do much with what is before me, by the grace of God! Take up your father's mantle, your mother's faithfulness, your brother's generosity, and your sister's compassion; "and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

"When shall the day appear, dear Lord,
That I shall be called to dwell above,
And stand and bow among them there,

And view thy face, and sing thy love?"

Spurgeon's Word to A Young Preacher

While I was in Ireland in 1972, I preached in a Baptist Church in Limerick. The pastor, Brother Allen, told me that the church building and six other buildings like it, were sponsored and largely paid for by Spurgeon's congregation in London. The cost of the seven buildings was twenty-one thousand pounds in 1890. Most people are aware of Spurgeon's power in the pulpit but not many are aware of his generous missionary spirit, his deep concern for young struggling preachers, and his willingness to help other churches. He once said to a young preacher, "You go down to so-and-so, and never show yourself again until you have established a chapel. Hang on by your hands, and then by your teeth, and then by your eyebrows. I will find money to keep you in bread and cheese! You have to establish a self-supporting cause and do not come back until you have done it."

Shiloh

The scepter shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come.

Genesis 49:8-10

Here is the great and glad word! Here is the great prophecy; the Messiah will come through the tribe of Judah, the family of Jesse and the house of David. Where did Jacob get the name Shiloh? God gave him a special name for a special person and a special time. Here are some of the meanings given to the word by various writers:

1. Shiloh means "*sent*" (John 9:7). Some point out the likeness between Siloam and Shiloh. Christ is truly the sent one: "As my Father sent me..."
2. Shiloh means the "*son*," others say (Isa. 9:6-7). He is the true Son of God, the Son of David, and the Son of Man.
3. Shiloh means "*the one to whom it belongs*" (Ezek. 21:25-27). The scepter, the crown, the throne, and the worship belong to him. All others are imposters (Col. 1:14-18).
4. Shiloh means "*peace*." It is said that the word comes from the same word as "Salem" or "peace" (Heb. 7:2). The Lord Jesus is our peace (Rom. 5:1). He made peace through the blood of his cross.

"Unto him shall the gatherings of the people be." The object of his covenant, his cross, and his coming to earth was to redeem a people and gather them to himself for ever. They shall come! In repentance, faith, and love, they shall come! (John 6:37-39).

Behold Your God

For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

2 Corinthians 13:8

The Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Our God is sovereign; "None can stay his hand, nor say unto him what doest thou?" The gospel is true! The Lord Jesus is almighty God manifest in the flesh. The will of God in his covenant mercies and the redemptive works of his beloved Son shall be victorious! "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. "

Neither Paul, nor the Corinthians, nor any man, nor all men, nor angels, nor Satan, nor the forces of evil can do anything to alter God's person, purpose, will, nor defeat his truth. Whether in obedience or in rebellion; whether in sincerity or hypocrisy; whether in life or death—his will shall be done! "It is the Lord. Let him do what seemeth him good" (1 Sam 3:18).

Emptied but Full

For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Luke 14:11

This is a mystery that natural men do not understand, only those who have been touched first in regeneration by God (1 Cor. 2:7-14). In the natural world the way up is up, but in the spiritual world the way up is down. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11). In the natural world, to live is to live, but in the spiritual world the way to live is to die (Matt. 10:39). In the natural world men find satisfaction in their own strength, but Paul declared, "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10). The greatest thing God can do for a person (whatever the cost) is to show him in heart and soul the vanity of all things in this world (Eccles. 1:2, 14) and to turn his interest, affection, love and concern from the world to Christ (Matt 5:3-12). To be full is to be emptied of self, to be wise is to become a

fool for Christ's sake, to be clothed is to be stripped, to receive is to give, to reign is to serve and to be rich is to become poor.

The Lord God of Elijah

When the Lord God took Elijah up into Heaven, Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah, smote the waters, and cried, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

Where is he? He is in the heavens; he is in Christ Jesus; he is in his word; he is on the throne of grace; he is in the midst of those who believe and worship him; he is in every act of providence; he is in every breeze, every cloud, every moment, every heartache, every tear, every joy; he is in all who believe, for "Lo, I am with you always."

Job Fell Upon the Ground and Worshipped

Job did not try to hide his sorrow; he wept before God. God's people are people with tender feelings, and when they are called upon to bear the rod, they feel it! God takes away our heart of stone; he does not turn the heart to stone. We sorrow, indeed, but not as those who have no hope.

Job's sorrow was sanctified by worship! Sorrow and trouble should always lead to worship and praise. In all of this trouble, trial and sorrow, Job did not speak in an unworthy manner against God. He did not dishonor the name of God, nor compare his lot with the lot of others. He fell down and worshipped God (Job 2:10; 13:15). If grief presses you to the ground, worship there. If trials lay you low, worship there.

The Unbeliever's Fear of Death

Many of the (so-called) great and confident natural men have no peace at all when they think of death. Chief Justice Wendell Holmes wrote to a friend, "I live in cringing fear of death. Underneath the light exterior of my life, which is nothing more than the role of an actor, lies the stark reality that I am growing old and I do so in fear and trembling." Not so the believer in Christ! Paul wrote "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil 1:21,23).

The Earnest of The Spirit

Now he that hath wrought (saved) us for this selfsame thing is God, who has also given unto us the earnest of his Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:5

It is our Sovereign Lord who has chosen, redeemed, and called us to glory and immortality. We can be sure of that inheritance; for God, in his unchangeable purpose, has determined to populate the new heaven and new earth with a people conformed to the image of his Son. He has provided for them a perfect righteousness and has given us his Holy Spirit as a pledge of that promise. We know that we are sinners saved by his grace, and all of us have feelings of carnality of flesh and are dissatisfied with ourselves but:

Is there not a trust, faith, and confidence in Christ?

Is there not always a rejoicing in his promises and word?

Is there not often a blessed assurance of his grace?

Is there not a love for Christ? His gospel? His people? Surely!

There is no perfect faith here, but there is "The earnest of the Spirit."

Growing in Grace

Peter prayed for believers a multiplication of grace and peace through the knowledge of Christ. The grace and peace of God is infinite in Christ and knows no degrees; but through the word of God, as I grow in the knowledge of Christ, there will be new discoveries of the love and favor of God to my soul. There will be a growth in the internal graces of love, faith, humility and gentleness, and an increase in spiritual peace in believing, in trials and in perseverance.

Trust the Lord Jesus Christ Alone

The mere knowledge of facts about the Bible, and even about the person and work of Christ, will not save us unless that knowledge leads us to really and truly trust our souls in the blessed Redeemer's hands. Faith must act in this fashion: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he came to save sinners; and therefore, as a sinner, I must rest myself on him. I know that his righteousness and blood justify the ungodly; therefore, I trust him to be both my righteousness and my redemption before God."

Christ Is Life

This is the record.

1 John 5:11

This is the sum and substance of all that is written and preached. God, out of his pure, free grace, is pleased to give unto us eternal life. This life is the spiritual life lost in the fall, life forever free from sin, sorrow, and death. This life is in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ! This life is not only purposed in him, promised through him, and purchased by him, but he is that life! (Col. 3:4). He that has the redeeming Christ, the interceding Christ, the indwelling Christ has life!

My Soul, Wait Thee Only Upon God

Psalm 62

Amid all the trials, conflicts, and attacks from the enemies of his soul, David always returned to his original hope, as the dove returned to the ark. "My soul, wait thou only upon God." The battle is the Lord's; and he only can justify, comfort, and keep me. "My expectation is from him" (vs. 5). In him dwells all fullness, all blessings, all wisdom. He will exalt me in due time, for "he only is my rock and my salvation" (vs. 6). If God be for me, who or what can be against me? And really, what does it matter who is against me, for I am complete in him and accepted of the Father in him. "He only is my defence" (vs. 6) against false charges or true charges. So I will "trust in him at all times" (vs. 8); in times of prosperity or poverty, for I know (or should know) how to abound or to be abased. In times of fellowship or loneliness, he will never leave me. In times of health, sickness, or death, he is my refuge. I will "pour out my heart before him" (vs. 8). His heart is set on us; let us set our hearts upon him. Let our inmost desires, doubts, thoughts, sorrows, and joys be poured out like water before the Lord. Hide nothing from him, for nothing can be hid from him. We shall learn to pray when we learn to be open and honest before the Lord!

Christ The Way

Our Lord declared, "I am the way; no man cometh to the Father but by me!" The scriptures plainly set forth the fact that because of our sin, we

are separated from God and, of ourselves, there is no way back to God! The Lord taught this to Adam early; for when he, "Drove out the man, he placed a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24). There is no way back to life. But Christ, our Lord, has come to bring us to God. How shall he (as the God-man) deal with that sword of wrath and justice? Shall he command it to disappear? Shall he find a way around it? No! He will be the "Just God and Saviour" and take that sword into his own heart and pour out his soul unto death to bring many to God. The way to God is opened, for Christ is the way! God taught Israel the impossibility of any man's coming to him apart from Christ when he revealed his glory upon the mercy-seat in the Holy of Holies and forbade any man to enter except the High Priest once a year with the blood atonement. But Christ has come to bring us to God, not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood he entered once into the holy place and obtained eternal redemption for us. Now the veil is rent, the way is opened, and we are commanded to come boldly into his presence by Christ, the way!

Lord Remember Me

Notice the meaning of the name "Zechariah" in these four words: "He whom God remembered " The most precious gift of all is to be remembered of God. "God remembered Abraham" (Gen. 19:29). "God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Exo. 2:24). And none of us can forget the prayer of the dying thief, "Lord, remember me" (Luke 23:43). All such pleaders shall not be forgotten of him.

Blood Before the Lord

Note in scripture how many times the blood is said to be, "Before the Lord" Whether any man saw it or not was of small account, for it was offered for sin "Before the Lord" When the Passover lamb was slain in Egypt, where was the blood placed? It was on the outside of the door "before the Lord." He said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

The suffering and death of Christ on behalf of his people was "before the Lord," *unto* the Lord, to declare the Lord's righteousness, to satisfy the Lord's justice, to fulfill the Lord's purpose, to glorify the Lord's character, to enable the Lord to be both just and justifier!

The atonement does not change the nature and character of God, but rather the atonement honors and magnifies the character of God. The death

of Christ is not the cause of God's love, but the result of it. God is not merciful because Christ died; Christ died because God is merciful. In order that every attribute might be expressed, glorified, and honored, God gave his Son to be the Saviour of the chosen people! Thank God we have an atonement "Before the Lord."

Come to Christ For Mercy

The sinner who truly comes to Christ does not come to have his earthly problems solved nor to have his body and bank account healed. He comes to be saved from sin; he comes to Christ for mercy. Mercy is the sinner's sole request.

If you, as a guilty sinner, have not come to Christ for mercy and redemption from your sins, you have not come to Christ aright. When he has saved us and made us his own, whatever he is pleased to bring to pass in our earthly lives will be for our good and His glory. Be it success or failure, sorrow or joy, life or death; his grace is sufficient!

“Wealth and honor I disdain;
Earthly comforts, Lord, are vain;
These will never satisfy;
Give me Christ or else I die.”

Christ Was Manifested

For the life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

1 John 1:2

The life was manifested! This is our gospel! Our gospel is not "The life is," but our gospel is "The life was manifested," has come forth from its eternal mystery; "The life was manifested," so to be seen, to be heard, to be handled, to be received and loved. "In him was life and the life was the light of men." In the Word was life, and the Word was the life. The light of the world is the word of God; the manifested life of God, which we have seen and heard, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Christ Jesus is our gospel; and that which we have seen and heard we have and will continue to declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us (be one with him and with us in his glorious

body); and "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ." As Moses said in Num.10:29, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good; for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel."

The Offence of The Cross

And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

Galatians 5:11

Bishop J.C. Ryle once said; "The cross is the strength of the minister. It is the heart of the gospel. I would not preach a sermon without the cross. I would feel like a soldier without a weapon, like an artist without a brush, like a ship without a rudder, a laborer without tools. Let others, if they will, preach law and morality. Let others hold forth the terrors of hell and the riches of heaven. Let others drench their congregations with the sacraments and the church. Give me the cross of Christ! This is the only lever which has turned the world upside down. This is the only gospel that will make men forsake their sins. This is the only message which can give peace to a troubled soul. And if the cross will not do it, nothing will."

A man may begin preaching with a perfect knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; but he will do his hearers no good unless he knows something of the cross.

A missionary may go forth with compassion for the poor, tenderness for the sick, and pity for the enslaved; but he can never relieve their poverty of spirit, sickness of soul, nor bondage of will unless he goes to them with the gospel of Christ crucified! Never was there a preacher who did much for the conversions of sinners who did not dwell on Christ crucified. This is the preaching that the Holy Ghost delights to bless. He loves those who honor the cross.

Let Us Pray

It is the happiest moment in one's life when we can go up to our Father and our God in Christ Jesus and can know and feel of a surety that his infinite love is set on us, and that our love is gone forth to him. There is a sweet embrace that is not to be excelled. The one clue to the whole labyrinth of providence, of doctrinal opinion, and of sacred thought is to be found in that one hallowed exercise called prayer. Continue much in prayer, and neither Satan nor the world shall much deceive you.

Love Is the Evidence of Salvation

If I give away all my possessions to feed the poor.

1 Corinthians 13:1-4

Why would a man do this if he did not love the poor? He might, like Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-5), or the Pharisee (Luke 18:11, 12), do it for praise and self-righteous purposes. "If I give my body to be burned," or die as a martyr for the cause of orthodoxy and religion, "It will all profit me nothing!" No actions, no human sacrifice, and no human sufferings are sufficient to entitle any soul to heaven. If I have not love for Christ and for men, all of these gifts, offices, and self-righteous efforts are vain and useless! Love is the commandment of Christ (John 15:12). Love is the evidence of salvation (John 13:35). Love is the fruit of the indwelling Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Love is so essential that, if a man has everything else and has not love, he is nothing. Love is not the prerogative of a few; it must be the possession of all.

Worship

Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Psalm 29:2

To worship the Lord is to bow down, to reverence him, to express devotion, admiration, and love for our Lord.

To worship the Lord is heart business; "My son give me thine heart" (Prov. 23:26); "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. 10:10).

To worship is to be where true holiness and beauty really are, in his presence!! "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:3). "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 110:3). This was the Samaritan's problem: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; you say men should worship in Jerusalem!" Our Lord replied, "You worship you know not what! God is Spirit and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and truth."

True worship has nothing to do with form, buildings, places, garments, or even words! True worship is worshipping God himself, in the beauty of his presence. As Isaiah discovered, all else is but chaff (Isaiah

6:1-5). "Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his presence" (Psalm 96:6).

An Article Worth Repeating

How refreshing! In this day (when practically every form of religion is so pigeonholed and typed that it appeals to some segment of our natural society) to preach the gospel of the mystery of Christ in such Bible terms that a natural man is shut up to divine revelation and is unable to identify us with some particular brand of religion! It is said of Spurgeon that no organization could really brand him and say he belongs to us! The hyper-Calvinist called him an Arminian, the Arminians called him a hyper-Calvinist, the legalist called him an antinomian, and the antinomians called him a legalist. The established churches hated him and the Baptists finally disowned him, but true believers of every persuasion loved him and understood his message.

The natural man understands logical Calvinism. He can easily identify with the cooperative redemption presented in Arminianism. He has no difficulty with modern fundamentalism! But the free gospel of the grace of God through the merits and death of the Lord Jesus Christ must be revealed to the heart by the Spirit of God. Barnard used to say, "Preachers are wrapping salvation up in a neat little package and selling it to unsuspecting men and women. Preachers are trying to present the great mysteries of redemption in language which the natural man can understand and approve of, so that he can make his peace with God and go on about his regular routine and fleshly pursuits."

Blessed is the preacher who can shut men up to free and sovereign grace, and yet lovingly, sincerely invite all men to look to Christ and be saved. Blessed is the preacher who knows that, "Salvation is of the Lord," who has the patience to wait upon the Lord to regenerate, awaken, and call his hearers; yet he prays for their deliverance, urges them to close with Christ, and beseeches them to, "Be reconciled to God." Blessed is the preacher who can preach with equal force and confidence both the preservation and perseverance of believers. He will not, "turn away from us and we will not depart from him." Blessed is the preacher who can rejoice in imputed righteousness; "with his holy garments on, I am as spotless as his dear Son;" and yet along with his congregation hunger and thirst for spiritual growth and personal godliness. Blessed is the preacher who can find and preach both justification and sanctification at Calvary. We do not go to Calvary for justification and then to Sinai for

sanctification. We are "Complete in him." Blessed is the preacher who can preach prophetic truth in such a way that his hearers are looking for the returning Christ and not only the return of Christ! Blessed is the preacher who administers believers' baptism, presides at the Lord's table, and oversees the business of the Lord's church, not according to; "The way we do it in our circles and according to our custom and tradition," but according to the Word of God!

Your Notes

Your Notes

