

1. Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan For the Year 1986

The Christ

All who are born of God believe that Jesus is! The title *The Christ* signifies “anointed” and includes all the offices of the Son of God.

To believe Him to be the Christ is to believe Him to be that Prophet which Moses said should come, who has declared the whole mind and will of the Father. It is to believe He is that Priest that should arise after the order of Melchizedek and make atonement for sin and intercede for transgressors. It is to believe that He is that King whom the Father has set over *all things!*

This faith is not a mere assent to the facts nor the knowledge which devils have, but it is a *heart faith* and *love for Him* and His glory.

We See!

Our Lord said unto the religious leaders, *“If you were blind, you should have no sin; but now you say, WE SEE; therefore, your sin remaineth.”*

John 9:41

The simple meaning of these words of Christ to the Pharisees is this: if you were blind and sensible of it, and knew yourselves to be in sin and spiritual darkness, and if you were desirous of the grace of God and the light of His glory and truth, your sin would not be imputed to you. God would have mercy on you and pardon your transgressions. For He came into the world to save sinners, to give sight to the blind, and to set the captive free.

But now you, “We see!” You think yourselves to be wise and knowing; you stand in no need of a miracle of grace. You need not the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. You think that you have

righteousness and the key of knowledge. You shut your eyes against the clear evidence against you. Therefore, your sins rest upon you and are not laid on Christ.

They sinned willfully against both light and knowledge in rejecting Christ the Messiah! They sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, who came to reveal Christ, and this sin is never forgiven.

In Him

If we lean upon the promises of God themselves and not upon Jesus Christ, in whom the promises are given, all will come to nothing! *“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).

Love in Truth

Let us not merely profess with our tongues that we love one another, but let us prove it by deeds; for this is the only true way of truly showing love. Talking about love is mere show. Demonstrating love in meeting the physical, material, and emotional needs of others is *love in truth!*

No one truly has the love of God in him or a love for the brethren unless he demonstrates that love and care when the occasion presents itself.

Love says, “If you have a need, what I have is yours.”

Don’t Chew on the Briars

There is not a preacher – living or dead – with whom you cannot find fault, either in what he says, what he writes, or what he does. Perfection is only found in our Lord. *“I find no fault in HIM.”* His ambassadors,

however, are human and not only subject to mistakes, but prone to error, except they are kept, led, and taught by the Holy Spirit.

Let us be patient with one another, pray for one another, and look for the good and not the bad. Don't chew on the briars in a message or an article. Even a donkey knows enough to eat the hay and spit out the briars!

A Perfect Robe of Righteousness

The moment a man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ he is in, of, and blessed with the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 4:3). He is perfectly holy before God!

Long ago Pastor Weaver of London, England told about a friend who was very poor and dressed practically in rags. The pastor took him to his home and gave him a shirt and a suit of clothes. When the man was fully dressed in pastor Weaver's suit, he stood before the pastor and asked, "Well, Mr. Weaver, what do you think of me now?" Mr. Weaver replied, "I think you look very respectable." The man wisely said, "Yes, I do; but it is not me. I am not respectable; it is your clothes that are respectable."

My friends, it is not you, but the righteousness of Christ which makes you acceptable before God. *"Your renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; for it was PERFECT THROUGH MY COMLINESS, which I put upon thee, saith the Lord God"* (Ez. 16:14).

Rejoicing in Trials and Afflictions

1 Peter 4:12-13

Vs. 12._ *"Beloved believers, do not be amazed and bewildered by difficult trials and afflictions which come upon you."* Afflictions, trials, and sufferings are the common lot of God's people in all ages. God has only one Son without sin – none without suffering! For even Christ our Lord suffered hatred, reproach, and contradiction (Jn. 16:1-3; 33). Trials in the life of a believer

are not by chance but are by appointment and according to the will of God (Phil. 1:29). Trials and afflictions try the graces of believers.

- 1.) They try our faith, which becomes more precious through trials.
- 2.) They try our love for Christ, which cannot be dimmed or drowned in the floods of suffering.
- 3.) They try our hope of eternal life, weaning us from fleshly foundations.
- 4.) They try our profession of religion, revealing whether it is in Christ's person or in the loaves and fishes He provides (Jn. 2:23-25).

Trials are not strange and unusual for the true believer, but they are the common lot of all who will live godly in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3:12).

Vs. 13. Rejoice and glory in trials and afflictions brought upon you by the will of God and for the sake of the gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

- 1.) Rejoice that the hand of God is upon you in mercy, making you like Christ, creating saving graces in you, and counting you worthy to suffer for His glory.
- 2.) Rejoice that you are blessed to share the sufferings of Christ, being identified with Him in a world that rejects and hates Him (Jn. 15:18-20).

Three True Statements

Long ago someone wrote:

- 1.) Because God is a living God, He *can* hear us!
- 2.) Because God is a loving God, He *will* hear us!
- 3.) Because God is a covenant God in Christ, He has *bound himself to hear all* who call upon Him through Christ Jesus!

True Conversion

True conversion gives a man pardon but does not make him presumptuous.

True conversion gives a man rest but does not make him less watchful.

True Confession

Paul wrote, “*With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*” (Rom. 10:10).

There must be no confession of the mouth where there is no genuine believing with the heart. But when true faith is found in the heart, there will be a bold, firm, and continual confession of Christ in *word, works, and will*. This confession of Christ embraces the whole of a person’s life.

I do not think that a person merely saying, “I accept Jesus as my personal Saviour, and I will be baptized and join the church,” is what Paul teaches here as confessing Christ with the mouth. 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 of what God, by His Spirit, has created within our heart.

“One tree is not a forest,” it has been said. So one public act is not a confession of Christ.

True Believers

True believers do not need bumper stickers on their cars and buttons on their coat lapels in order to inform others that they love and believe in the Lord Jesus. If a person is a child of God and redeemed by Christ, in whom the Spirit of God dwells, those about him will become aware of it very shortly.

True Understanding

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

Love Your Family in Christ

1 Peter 3:8 says, “*Love as brethren.*” This would be to love all believers, to love as Christ loved us, to love without hypocrisy, to love, not in word only, but in both deed and truth, and to love continually; for true love never dies!

How will this love be expressed? In praying for one another, in forgiving one another, in sharing with one another both temporal and spiritual blessings, and in seeking out one another for fellowship and encouragement. Don’t wait for a brother to come to you; go to him.

The Life Preserver

Someone said, “It is not the life buoy on board the ship that saves the man who is drowning, nor is it his belief that the buoy is able to save! No! He must have the buoy around his body, or his hand upon it, or he will perish.”

It will not save my soul only to know that Christ is the Saviour (though this I must know) or that His atonement is sufficient to save. I must trust and embrace Him by faith. There must be, as Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:12, a *committal* to Christ Jesus. By faith I rest my weary, troubled, and sinful soul on Christ alone.

“Out of my bondage, sorrow, and night, □
Jesus, I come! Jesus, I come! □
Into Thy freedom, gladness, and light, Jesus, I come to Thee!”

Put on the New Man

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 and creates a new man in true righteousness and holiness.

But to “*put on the new man*” is to walk daily according to the Biblical principles of grace and holiness formed in us. Walk in the Spirit of Christ and avoid not only the works of evil but the very appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).

Justified 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 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 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.

Rejoice

Did you know that the word *rejoice* is used ten times in the book of Philippians? I pray that we may learn the word in heart and experience as well as in doctrine. There is always cause to *rejoice in the Lord!*

Rejoice in His blood, which cleanses. Rejoice in His righteousness, which sanctifies. Rejoice in His providence, which works all things together for

our good. Rejoice in His intercession, which is continual and effectual. Rejoice that your names are written in the Book of Life.

Regeneration

He who 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 (which he despises); but he does not give himself up to sin, excuse it, nor continue in it as its servant. God's nature and the grace of the Holy Spirit abide in him, and he cannot practice a life of sin. He is born of God and delights in the commandments of his Lord.

A life of disobedience is distasteful to a believer who longs to be like Christ. A godly walk and a spirit of love and grace are evidences of grace and faith. The absence of these is evidence of the absence of grace.

Reflections on Thirty-Six Years

"If any man serve ME, him will my Father honor."

John 12:26

It was thirty-six years ago that God was pleased to reveal His Son and the gospel of His glory and grace in me and to this church. Since that time we have endeavored to preach the gospel of His free and sovereign grace regardless of the cost, the consequences, or the results. Our message, our doctrine, and our emphasis on the person and effectual work of the dear Redeemer is totally unchanged from that time in 1950 to this day and, by His mercy, will not change!

The Lord has been pleased to bless us – oh, how He has blessed us, enlarged our borders, and extended our ministry around the world. To God be the glory! I encourage you to pray for me, for the television ministry, and for the conferences and church meetings here and abroad.

God opens the doors without our promotion, He supplies the need without our begging, and He reveals Christ to sinners without any compromise of His truth.

If I could leave one strong, solemn word to young pastors and preachers, it would be, “Preach, without compromise, the divine, incarnate, crucified, risen, victorious, exalted Christ! Look not to, nor lean upon, the arm of flesh in any way. Know no man after the flesh. Enter not into the ways and means of well-meaning religionists who suggest shortcuts to success.”

There are no shortcuts nor doors which we can open by fleshly methods. God will honor the SON, and He will honor and use men who honor the Son.

Paid in Full

If there is one penny of that debt unpaid which Christ was engaged to satisfy, it would not be consistent with the holy justice of God to admit Him into heaven as our forerunner, much less to sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

But thanks be unto God, “Jesus paid it all – all the debt I owe.”

Salvation is of the Lord

“But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. 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 Pet. 1:5).
It is of the Lord in its *ultimate perfection* (Phil. 3:20-21).

I am Not Ashamed of the Gospel

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, of mercy to the guilty through Christ, nor of salvation by substitution. Though it may be foolishness to the natural man and a stumbling block to the religious, I am not ashamed to believe it, love it, and preach it.

Some in religion reveal that they cannot bear the reproach or offense of the gospel; for, while they may own it in private, they will not preach it in public. Some seek to cover the offense of the cross with words of man's wisdom and human philosophy. But, what I believe, I shall believe, even if I believe it alone.

Live Unto Christ

This natural body is a dying body, subject to afflictions, diseases, infirmities, and eventually *death!* But if the Spirit of God dwells in us (by grace through faith), death is not the end; for He that raised Christ from the dead shall also, in His appointed time, raise our bodies from the grave (1 Cor. 15:12-22; 42-44). This body shall not always be in corruption and ruin but shall be raised in the image of Christ (1 Jn. 3:1-3).

Therefore, since our primary interest is not the flesh, materialism, and things of the world, but the kingdom of God and His righteousness – since to be fleshly minded is a sign of absence of the Spirit of Christ, and since our flesh and all pertaining thereunto shall die and we shall be raised in His likeness – we are not obligated to live for the flesh and this world, but to live unto Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Men and women who are freed from condemnation and death are not freed from obedience to Christ – nor do they want to be! To whom

much is given and forgiven, he will love much. We are motivated to holiness by His love for us and our love for Him (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

The Power and Wisdom of God

When Paul came to Corinth to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ; *“the testimony of God”*, because it bears a testimony to His love, grace, and mercy in giving His beloved Son to be our Saviour and Redeemer, he did not preach this gospel in lofty words of eloquence, or human philosophy, or man’s wisdom and intellect. He was resolved to make nothing the subject of his ministry and message *“save Jesus Christ and Him crucified”*. That which was the greatest offense to others was the most delightful thing to him because he knew that salvation comes only through and by the obedience and death of Jesus Christ.

And, as Paul determined, so he acted! His subject matter was not nature, arts, sciences, philosophy, nor dry morality, but salvation from sin through the crucified Christ. His style of preaching, his language, and his messages were delivered not in human logic, wisdom, and persuasion, but in the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the gospel of Christ, reveals the sin and inability of the human heart; when eyes are given to see the glory of God in Christ Jesus, the believing sinner’s confidence and assurance is not in the preacher, nor in the preacher’s personality, nor in a reasonable system of doctrine, but in Christ alone, who is the power and the wisdom of God.

Faith

The mere knowledge of facts about the Bible, 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 justified the ungodly; therefore, I trust Him to be both my righteousness and my redemption before God.”

The Righteousness of Christ

My salvation never depended on *my* righteousness, and my assurance now does not depend on *my* righteousness. John Jasper, when asked, “What right do you have to be in heaven?” replied, “I am not here on my righteousness but on the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul said, “*By the grace of God I am what I am.*”

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.

“Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace;
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt;
Yonder on Calvary’s mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.”

Keep Yourselves From Idols

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

1 John 5:21

Keep yourselves from anything or anyone that would occupy the place in your heart, affections, and thoughts due to *God alone!* Keep yourselves from images, superstitions, traditions, religious practices, and religious observances which are not according to the Scriptures and glorifying to God alone. *“We worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh”* (Phil. 3:3).

Pride

Pride is a strange and mysterious thing, and our natural thoughts do not help us to understand it. In times of recognition and some success in the ministry, I have had people say, “I pray that the Lord will keep you *humble.*” I would much rather that they pray the Lord would give me more wisdom, grace, and the opportunity to preach His gospel to many sinners.

If a man knows Christ, rejoices only in Him, and has no confidence in the flesh, how it pleases God to use him and what God is pleased to do through him *does not make him proud!* It is when a man moves in the strength of the flesh, tries to be what he is not, and tries to do what he is not called to do that pride is to be feared.

It all depends on one's being *where* God puts him, doing *what* God has called him to do. The first lesson any true servant of the Lord learns is, "*Without me, ye can do nothing.*" From then on, whether acclaimed or criticized by men, it matters not; for the glory of God and the gospel of Christ are my chief concern.

“Saviour, fix my soul on Thee,
All ambition let me flee;
Nothing want beneath, above,
Happy only in Thy love.”

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.

A Good Quote

“Forget injustices and neglect, but never forget a kindness nor an act of love!” I saw that on a wall. The author (whoever he may be) touched my heart and caused me to pray, “Lord, oh help me to do just that! Help me to actually and absolutely blot out of my mind all unpleasantries and every bad experience, and remember only the good times, the kind words, and the acts of love. Let me, in reference to every injustice and

neglect, be like my Lord and *remember them no more!*” “*And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*” (Heb. 10:17).

Be On Guard

Those who are so foolish as to allow *anything in their life* to cause them to renounce their faith in Christ and neglect their duty and privileges 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 apostasy and fleshly appetites; guard against neglecting worship and daily communion with the Lord; guard against unwholesome companions and worldly social contacts; guard against covetousness and materialism 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 pleasure which appeal to the 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 my lord* and to the gospel of His grace. Neither the smiles nor the frowns of the world will cause me to surrender what I believe. I have a responsibility to the church, my brothers, my family, and to those whose lives I touch. By His grace, I must not allow anything to cause me to quit the race nor fail to see it through.

In 35 years of pastoring and preaching, I have seen many runners in this race. Those who finish and are crowned with glory are those who *continue faithful*. They lay aside the weights and sins which hinder; they look neither *back* to Egypt which they have left nor *around* at others who profess to run, but only *forward* to Christ, their goal.

They do not always maintain the same pace, for sometimes the track is smooth and sometimes it is rocky or muddy; but they are always moving in the same direction; “*I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.*”

My Grace is Sufficient For Thee

Grace is what I need – God’s free, abundant, satisfying, sanctifying grace! I need grace to believe God and to continue in that faith. I need grace to give and forgive, grace to love and be loved, grace to live and grace to die.

If I have little grace, the fault is mine; for His grace is called “*abundant grace*”. The Lord may not give gold, but He will give grace. He may not give ease in life, but He will give grace in proportion to my need. He will certainly send me trials, but never without the grace to overcome. I may ask God for something which is not for my good and therefore He is not pleased to give it, but I may ask for as much grace as I will, and it will never be refused; for His throne is literally a throne of grace!

“Lord, fill me with Thy grace, make me an object of Thy grace, let my lips speak of Thy grace, and let my life be lived as a trophy of Thy grace!”

We Can’t All be Right

Some think that it does not matter what a man believes as long as he is sincere. The average churchgoer thinks that all religions are right. “You go to your church and I’ll go to mine. You believe what you think is right and I’ll believe what I think is right and we will all meet in heaven.”

My friends, we cannot all be right when we contradict one another so. It becomes every person to *search the scriptures* and see what God has said concerning eternal life, the person and work of His beloved Son, and how He can be both just and justifier.

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 soft-pedals his tongue, it breaks his

heart, it orders his steps, and it gives him a hearing ear. He lives for Christ; and, if necessary, he would die for Him.

Speaking the Truth in Love

I wonder, if when we preach or teach or witness to others, does the love of Christ and love for sinners come through in our words and in our countenance? I am interested to know if our hearers detect from our presentation of the gospel of sovereign grace (whether in sermon or articles) the love, compassion, and pity we should feel; or do we come across as harsh, bitter, and with a critical spirit? Do we tend to take our disappointments in some and our conflicts with others into the pulpit or classroom or personal discussions and tear into everybody?

This is not the way of Christ. 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 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.

Exhort and Encourage

One of the most encouraging signs of God’s blessings on this congregation is to see our men and women fellowshipping together in Christ and talking together about the Word of God and divine matters. Hebrews 3:13 says, *“Exhort one another, encourage one another, instruct one another while the time of life lasts and while the grace of God is available.”*

How can we do this?

1.) By worshipping, praying, and praising God together.

- 2.) By teaching, preaching, and studying the Scriptures.
- 3.) By talking together about divine things and less about foolish things.
- 4.) By a true, sincere, and affectionate interest in everyone's spiritual wellbeing.
- 5.) By warning one another when we see signs of indifference and error of spirit or action.

The Offense of the Gospel

Paul declared in Galatians 5:11 that the offense of the gospel of the cross – of substitution – never has ceased nor will it ever cease. To suppose it has ceased is folly. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the gospel of grace, mercy, and peace; yet its history shows it to have been assailed with bitter hatred, rejection, and persecution through all ages. It is clearly offensive to the unregenerate mind whether in the pulpit, the pew, or the world. And there is no reason to believe that the gospel is one jot more palatable today than it used to be. *The world and the gospel are both unchanged!*

- 1.) Its doctrine of an effectual atonement offends man's pride.
- 2.) By addressing all men as guilty sinners offends man's dignity.
- 3.) Declaring that heart knowledge can only be by the revelation of God offends man's wisdom.
- 4.) Proclaiming the Lordship of Christ and obedience as a bond slave to Him offend man's love of self and sin.

How do men show their contempt for the gospel of God's free grace in Christ?

- 1.) By persecution of believers.

- 2.) By refusing to preach the message of grace.
- 3.) By mixing the grace of God with the works of men.
- 4.) By accusing those who preach grace of being hyper-Calvinists, while they themselves cloud the issues and take the edge off the sword.

There are thousands of ways of showing that the gospel of free grace still offends us in one respect or the other.

Taught By The Spirit

If I am merely convinced by reason, a better reasoner may deceive me. If I hold a doctrinal opinion because it seems to me to be correct, I may be led to think differently another day. But, if the Holy Spirit has been my teacher and burned the gospel into my soul, what I have learned will never be unlearned.

To Believe Him to be The Christ

“Whosoever believeth that JESUS IS THE CHRIST is born of God,” and all who are born of God believe that Jesus is the Christ. The title *the Christ* signifies *anointed* and includes all the offices of the Son of God. To believe Him to be *the Christ* is to believe Him to that Prophet which Moses said should come, who has declared the whole mind and will of the Father. It is to believe He is that Priest which should arise after the order of Melchizedek and make full atonement for sin and effectual intercession for transgressors. It is to believe He is King of kings and Lord of lords, whom God hath set over all things from all ages and for all time.

This faith in Christ is not a mere assent to the fact nor merely acknowledging it as the demons have done (Lk. 4:41). It is to believe with the heart (Rom. 10:9-10). It is to bow the knee in repentance and to look to Christ, trust in Him, receive Him as our righteousness, to rest in His

blood for cleansing, and to lay hold of Him as our Savior, Redeemer, and Mediator.

Such faith is far above and beyond the reach of the human mind. It is the gift of God. It is the result of regeneration and a new birth, for we must be drawn to Christ and taught of God (Jn. 6:44-45).

Preaching and Prayer

I am not prepared to say which is more important or who does the better service; the man who preaches the gospel or the ones who pray for him as he does preach. I would not want one without the other! Often the kind of service which seems simple and commonplace to men is most precious to God. Spurgeon often said, when asked the secret of his pulpit power, "My people pray for me."

Because He Lives

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

Romans 6:9

So 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; but 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.

Lay Aside These Things

Peter exhorts us to lay aside (to be done with) those things that are disagreeable and contrary to holiness and a spiritual life. Unfortunately, this not a “once-for-all” accomplishment, but a continual effort through the grace of God to lay aside the following:

1.) *Malice*. Ill-will and ill-feelings towards others. Malice is born of self-love and self-righteousness.

2.) *Guile*, or deceit. This word is used for all dishonest ways of gaining our selfish goals. Let us be men and women who speak the truth and deal honestly with all men.

3.) *Hypocrisy*. This is simply the opposite of sincerity. It is pretending to be what we are not and speaking with our lips that which is not in our hearts.

4.) *Envy* is the natural effect of malice and reveals the absence of love. Envy is the uneasiness a person feels in the happiness, prosperity, or success of another.

5.) *Evil speaking*. When we think of evil speaking, we usually think of blasphemy or dirty words; but perhaps the worst and most damaging form of evil speaking is slander, gossip, and criticism of others. Sowing discord among brethren, whispering, and fault-finding do not reveal a work of grace in the heart.

Peter’s exhortation is to lay these sins aside and, as newborn babes, to desire the sincere (pure, unmixed) Word of God that we may grow in grace, in knowledge, in love, in patience, in humility, and in faith.

Grace is to be Preferred to Gifts

If the gifts of miracles had continued in the church, they would have attracted the notice of people to the might and power of God in the physical realm rather than to His redemptive power and purpose through

Christ in the spiritual realm of the heart. “*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*”

The unusual gifts in the early church served as signs and credentials until the Scriptures were completed (Heb. 2:1-4). Grace is to be preferred to gifts.

Seek Christ First

May I say something again that I have said many times? I will try to say it a bit differently and illustrate what I mean.

“Do not seek assurance – seek Christ! Do not seek peace first – seek Christ first and peace and assurance will follow.” You may have an assurance and not have Christ, just as you may enjoy the peace of a false profession, which is no peace. But you cannot truly know and have Christ without some assurance and peace.

You must have the *root* of grace before you enjoy the *flower* of peace. Suppose a child sees flowers blooming in the yard, goes and picks several of the prettiest blooms, and makes her own little garden of flowers. She stands back, admiring the blossoms, and says, “Now, what a fine flower garden I have!” But, to her dismay, the next day all of the blooms are withered and dead. They looked good for a while; but, having no root, no source of life, they died.

Such is peace without Christ; it does not last very long. It would be better to plow the ground, plant the seeds of grace, and wait until they sprout; then you will have the living flowers, not borrowed flowers. 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.

Love Your Brother

Nothing can be more contradictory than for a man to say, “I love God and hate my brother.” A man cannot love God and hate the image of God before his eyes; for God is before us in those who bear His image and the likeness of His Son (1 Jn. 3:23-24).

Our Walk

We are redeemed from death and sin to life and glory by the free grace of God through faith in Christ, and this faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9). However, lest the apostle should give the impression that good works and a holy life are unnecessary, he adds, “*We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, UNTO GOOD WORKS.*”

The Spirit that lives in us is the Spirit of love, joy, faith, humility, and righteousness. Our calling is a holy calling; our Father is a merciful and holy Father; our walk is with Him.

The Sin Unto Death – Apostasy

“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. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that 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. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”

1 John 5:16-21

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. And those who have an interest at the throne of grace should make use of it for others, especially for weak brothers and for those who are overtaken with sin.

We are encouraged to pray for the lost, that God will save them (Rom. 10:1); but this verse says if a brother (a born-again member of the church) is observed to sin (as the best of men do in word, thought, and deed) or falls into sin, we are to pray for him! God will hear and give the brother life, by which may be comfort and peace, 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 or a transgression of a single commandment, but apostasy, by which men alienate themselves from Christ and surrender themselves to Satan. We ought not rashly to

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.

Spurgeon on Spiritual Depression

Mr. Spurgeon, in a message preached when he was 54 years old, confessed to times of great depression of spirit. “I felt a great heaviness of spirit. I knew that I believed, but somehow I could not get comfort from the truth I preached. I even began to wonder whether I was really saved. Being on holiday, I went to hear a brother preach. While he preached a sermon full of gospel, tears flowed from my eyes, and I was in such joy on hearing the gospel that I said, ‘O yes, there is spiritual life within me, for I hear the gospel, love the gospel, and the gospel can touch my heart and stir my soul.’”

What a grand evidence to every believer – nothing moves us, stirs us, or comforts us like the gospel of our Lord Jesus!

Supporting Those who Preach the Gospel

The Apostle Paul has much to say about *giving*. He calls it a *grace* (2 Cor. 8:7). He has much to say about *liberality and generosity*, saying that it “*proves the sincerity of your love for Christ and others*” (2 Cor. 8:8). And he has a lot to say about the church’s care of, and support of, those who preach the gospel.

I have had very little to say on this subject because this congregation is so generous and gracious to ALL, especially to God’s preachers, pastors, and missionaries. But the attitude and actions of some (who call themselves men and women of grace) toward young pastors and preachers has come to my attention; and to say the least, *I am shocked!*

Do you not know that they who preach the gospel are to live OFF the gospel? (2 Cor. 9:14). Do you not know that when a man studies, prepares messages, preaches the gospel to you, and ministers to you in spiritual matters he is to share in your material gain? (2 Cor. 9:11). Have you no gratitude for that young man who prays for you, teaches your children, and preaches God's gospel?

I have been a preacher for over 35 years. I know all of the expenses of such a work – cars, tires, gasoline, repairs, books, shirts, shoes, suits, meals, family needs, and such. Even our pagan government does not require a man to go to war at his own expense. I am jealous for the welfare and comfort of my preacher brethren, especially the young ones.

Give them a generous gift, buy them a suit, a shirt, some tires for their cars. Share your garden, your freezer, speak an encouraging word to them. Treat them like servants of the Most High God ought to be treated!

"Inasmuch," Christ said, *"as ye have done it to the least of these, my brethren, YE HAVE DONE IT TO ME!"*

Work as if Both Everything and Nothing Depended on You

The believer throws himself fully into the Father's business while, at the same time, he falls back on the promise *"it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure"*. When I preach, I must study, prepare, and approach the pulpit as though what men hear, learn, and believe depended on my making the message plain and true to the Scriptures; yet, I know that my success depends entirely on God, as if I were not even there!

The same view should be taken by you in your witness, work, giving, and labor in the church. Men may plow, plant, and water; but nothing will come of it if God does not give the increase.

He Laid Down His Life For Us

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

1 John 3:16

Here is the most profound, sublime, and glorious truth that human tongue can speak, proclaimed in seven simple, one-syllable words. There is not a long, complicated word in the entire sentence!

Great thoughts can always be expressed in simple words, such as “Thank you,” or “I love you.” But *feeble thoughts* need to be dressed up in rhetoric and fine language. Someone said, “Today’s intellectuals need Latin words and confusing sentences to express their feeble ideas, but God’s servants are always content to preach the gospel in the Spirit and *with the understanding!*”

We do not preach for admiration but for edification. We do not preach to impress men but to instruct them.

The Antidote to Pride

When we feel justified and accepted in Christ, we also feel ourselves to be sinful beggars. Yes! The *more* we see of His grace, the *less* we feel ourselves to be. As He increases, we decrease.

The big letter “I” is so large with human nature; pride is such a part of us that it remains with us to the grave. But if there is anything that can kill pride, it is a better view of His grace to us in Christ. “O, to grace how great a debtor daily I’m constrained to be.” O where would I be? What would I be? What would be my eternal lot without my dear Redeemer?

When We See His Glory

When we see His glory, like Isaiah, we will speak in *humility*, “*Woe is me.*”

We will speak of our sins, “*I am a man of unclean lips.*”

We will speak in *obedience*, “*Here am I, Lord, send me.*”

We will make known the *gospel* of His glory, “*He was wounded for our transgressions.*”

Married to Christ

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 the law, 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, and their thoughts are occupied with their relationship with Christ. 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).

Receive Him

The most effective medicine will not heal unless it is taken; the finest coat will not warm the body unless it is put on; the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption secured by Christ will profit you nothing unless He is received with a believing heart. *“As many as RECEIVED Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”*

I urge you to *look* to Christ for every spiritual blessing; and, looking to Him as just and justifier, to *believe* on Him; and, believing on Him as able to do all that He says, to *receive* Him!

“ I c a n b u t p e r i s h i f I g o ; □
I a m r e s o l v e d t o t r y ; □
But if I stay away, I know □ I must forever die.”

The God of Jacob

“Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.”

Psalm 146:5

Who is this God of Jacob? He is the God who *chose Jacob!* *“Jacob have I loved”* (Rom. 9:10-13). He is the God who *revealed himself* to Jacob at Bethel! *“I am the Lord God...I am with thee and will keep thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of”* (Gen. 28:12-22). He is the God who gave Jacob a *new name!* *“Thy name shall be called no more Jacob (a supplanter) but Israel (a prince of God)”* (Gen. 32:24-28).

“Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel’s God: He made the sky,
And earth, and seas, with all their train:
His truth for ever stands secure;
He saves the oppressed, He feeds the poor,
and none shall find His promise vain.”

Unto Him

“Let us go unto him without the camp.”

Hebrews 13:13

The key words in this verse are *unto him*. It is possible to go without the camp and be no better off than we were before. We can leave organized religion, we can shun the ceremonies, we can separate ourselves from the world, we can become sanctimonious hermits and still be in the gall of bitterness unless we go *unto him*. Christ is our sin-offering, our sanctification, and our hope of redemption. Where He is, there we must be. Whether in the camp or without the camp, let us go forth therefore *unto him*.

In His shame and reproach, He suffered without the camp. In order to sanctify us with His blood and to fulfill the type of Himself in Leviticus 16:15-17, Christ was crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem. So, being one with Him, we leave the camp of ceremonialism, legalism, human works, worldliness, or whatever to walk with our Lord. Whatever shame or reproach we incur from the natural or the religious world is welcomed if it is because of our union with Christ. We find our joy and happiness in Him.

The world and everything in it are unstable and temporary. The riches, honor, pleasures, and people of this world and the fashion of it pass away. Though we are in this world, we are not of it. When the will of God is done, we shall be taken out of this world to heaven where all is peace and perfect love!

The Sum and Substance of the Gospel

“Christ died for the ungodly.”

Romans 5:6

This is the sum and substance of our gospel and is the great article of our 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, 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!

Count the Cost

We are living in the day of “instant religion”. The conviction is gone, the struggle is gone, counting the cost of discipleship is a thing of the past. Men make a profession today and are teachers tomorrow.

It is far easier and quicker to shake a preacher’s hand than to cling as a beggar to the hand of the Redeemer. It is easier and quicker to walk an aisle than to seek the Lord. It is easier to eat a wafer than to feed on the

Living Bread. It is more convenient to receive water on the brow or be plunged beneath the water than to drink continually at the Fountain of Life.

It may sound like I am discouraging, rather than encouraging, men to confess Christ. Not so! I am discouraging you from making a hurried, careless, half-hearted profession of religion that will leave you in a false refuge without God and without hope.

The Mercies of God

If the “*sons of Jacob*” will study the mercies of the God of Bethel, they will discover that His mercies are indeed *early* mercies, *unsought* mercies, *unmerited* mercies, *unchanging* mercies, and *priceless* mercies.

Begin and End in Christ

Every day I find it most healthy to my soul to try to walk as a saint; but, in order to do so, I must continually come to Christ as a sinner. I would seek to be perfect; I would strain after every virtue and forsake every false way; but still, as to my standing before God, I find it happiest to sit where I sat when I first looked to Jesus – on the Rock of His person and work, having nothing to do with my own righteousness, but *only with His*.

Depend on it, my dear friends, the only way of living as a believer is to live as a poor sinner and as nothing at all, having *Jesus Christ as all in all!* You may have all your growth in sanctification, all your progress in graces, all the development of your virtues that you will; but I earnestly pray you will never put any of these where Christ must be. If you have begun in Christ, then *finish in Christ*.

If you have begun in the flesh and then go on in the flesh, we know what the sure results will be. But, if you have begun with *Jesus Christ* as your Alpha, let Him be your Omega. I pray you never think that you are rising

when you get above this; for it is not rising when anything is added to Christ, but slipping downwards to your ruin. Stand still to this:

“Nothing in my hands I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

Betrayed With a Kiss

Judas betrayed his Master with *a kiss!* He came to the Lord with evil in his heart, the price of a compromise in his hand, religious devils at his side, and said, “*Hail Master*”, as he planted *a kiss* on the Lord’s cheek!

This is how most apostates and compromisers operate; they betray the Son of God and the gospel of grace *with a kiss*. They talk of love, humility, morality, and sugar and spice while they sell out to the religious world and betray the sovereign Son of God. And men watch their pretended affection and hear their words, “*Hail, Master*”, spoken so softly, smoothly, humbly, and sweetly, and they say, “Can such devout people be *enemies* of the Lord?”

Do not be deceived; sometimes the most devout looking, religious people can be the most hypocritical in the world. Do not be deceived by their kisses. *listen to their gospel!* Peter, bearing the sword, had more grace than Judas, who came with a kiss.

Tell It One More Time

Our Lord was made flesh and dwelt among men on this earth for over thirty years in full and perfect obedience to the law of God. “*By the obedience of ONE shall the many be made righteous.*” He then took upon Himself all of our sins. He was arrested, not only by men, but by the hand of divine justice, as if He had been the greatest sinner. “*He was numbered with the transgressors*” and given over to wicked men who scourged Him, crowned Him with thorns, spit upon Him, and condemned Him to be crucified. He died on the cruel tree, not for any sins of His own (for He

had none), but “*He was made a curse for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.*” “*He died, the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.*” Our Lord was buried and has risen from the dead, leaving our sin in the grave, and has ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on High to intercede and prepare a place for all who believe in Him. This is good news to the guilty, for our Lord “*came to seek and to save the lost.*”

“Firm as His throne the gospel stands,
My Lord, my hope, my trust;
If I am found in Jesus’ hands,
My soul can never be lost.”

Let the guilty sinner, who would be saved from all his sins, believe God and trust God as He is revealed in and through the Lord Jesus Christ; for, with Him, there is plenteous redemption, and sin is no longer imputed to those who are *in Christ by faith* (Rom. 4:7-8).

God’s Ways Are Not Our Ways

I thought to prepare myself for great things only to learn that it was the rough voice in the wilderness He planned to use and not the polished preacher; it was the weak, impulsive shepherd with the sling that He planned to use and not the mighty warrior with his armor of wit and arsenal of facts, doctrines, and learning.

If we don’t pour contempt on ourselves, *God will!*

Three Wonders in Heaven

Do you remember John Newton’s story of “The Three Wonders in Heaven”? The first wonder was that he would see so many there he did not expect to see there; the second was that he would miss so many he did expect to see there; but the third wonder would be the greatest wonder of them all – to find himself there.

When I hear myself and others censuring and condemning other believers because they are not like us, or are not perfect, I would remind myself and all that hear me that we are all saved by grace alone, and we have nothing that we did not receive.

I do not have any time for freewill Arminianism and a compromise of the gospel of Christ; but where we find those who love Christ Jesus and preach (however imperfectly) His grace, let us love, encourage, and pray for them.

If there is anything that will cure a critical, envious spirit, it is to have the grace we preach and profess become *a heart experience*.

No Better Gospel

Mr. Spurgeon once said, “I know that however many may preach the gospel better than I do, there is no one who can preach a better gospel than the one I preach; for I preach the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ Jesus.”

How true! Our gospel is the “*power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth*.” Our gospel gives all the glory to God, for “*salvation is of the Lord*.” Our gospel is true to the Scriptures, fulfilling every promise, pattern, and type. Our gospel enables God to be just and the justifier of sinners. Our gospel can save “*the chief of sinners*”. And our gospel will not lose one sheep given to Christ, called to Christ, and resting in Christ by faith.

What a rich and glorious gospel is our gospel!

A Worldwide Ministry

I am thankful to our gracious Lord for His continued mercies to, and blessings upon, this assembly of believers. I am grateful to all of you for your faith and generous support of the Lord’s ministry here.

The Lord has actually given us a *worldwide ministry* through the missionaries, tapes, television, and books. Our commentaries are now in thirty English speaking countries and are being translated into Portuguese, French, and Spanish. My preaching engagements and the open doors for our preacher brethren, whom the Lord has gifted in this place, enable us to assist and encourage other churches and pastors. This ministry also receives support from many television listeners, bulletin readers, and friends of the tape ministry.

To all, I express my sincere appreciation and encourage you to continue your prayerful and faithful assistance. I realize that I am too busy and on the road entirely too much to give personal attention to this congregation and the local services; but, in order to do that, we would have to refuse to minister where God obviously opens a door. This congregation, though, is mature, established in the Word, and God has raised up faithful men and women to minister to one another while the pastor shares the gospel of God's grace and his experience with God's sheep in other places.

We are doing what Paul exhorted Timothy to do when he wrote, "*Do the work of an evangelist...*" "*Preach the Word in season and out of season.*" Let us not ask for *less* to do and fewer responsibilities, but let us thank God for every open door and every opportunity to preach His Son, and let us pray that He will allow us to be the means to bring His dear ones to a knowledge of Christ.

"And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'HERE AM I; SEND ME!'" (Is. 6:8).

Eternally Beloved of the Lord

The Apostle Paul wrote, "*We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.*" If you are *beloved of the Lord*, you always were *beloved of the Lord*. He did not begin to love you when you repented of sin and believed on Christ. God saw you in Christ in His eternal covenant and loved you

then. That love for those *beloved of the Lord* was shown two thousand years ago when it pleased Him to bruise His Son for you.

Christ redeemed you not only before you were aware of His grace, but before you were born. There was nothing in you to merit His eternal, infinite, and unchangeable love. On the contrary, you were His enemies, profaned His name, and even despised His mercy after you heard about it.

“HEREIN IS LOVE, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

Psalm 23

Some believers are troubled because they cannot always and at all times feel the joy and comfort set forth in Psalm 23. We should remember that, though David lived long and wrote much, he wrote only one 23rd Psalm. There are other psalms; psalms of conviction, praise, prayer, seeking, and mourning. In fact, even this Psalm closes with our walk through the valley of death.

This *valley of death* is our entire journey through life. The fall of Adam put the stamp of death on everything and everyone. But we are walking through. It is not our home, and it is a valley of the *shadow* of death.

Christ has removed the substance and sting of death for us. The shadow of a dog can't hurt; the shadow of a gun can't kill. *“I will fear no evil.”* He does not say there will be no evil; but, because He is with me, I don't FEAR the evil.

Emmanuel

The mystery, power, and glory of the gospel is that *“God was manifest in the flesh.”* All the divine attributes are displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ – Emmanuel – *God with us!* Take Christ from the gospel and you have no

gospel. Take Jesus Christ and Him divine, incarnate, crucified, risen, and enthroned out of your preaching and you have no message and no ministry.

Whatever else you major on or whatever good work you accomplish, it is all wood, hay, and stubble if the Lord Jesus is not your central theme. If He be lifted up, He will draw men unto Him; and He *must* be lifted up or else the preaching is like the rattling of dry bones.

“ ’Tis not that I did choose Thee, □
For Lord, that could not be; □
This heart would still refuse Thee, □
Hadst Thou not chosen me.”

The Justice of God

The *justice of God* is in itself a great barrier to the salvation of a sinner. Because God is just, our sins must be punished. Never has there been a sin pardoned without atonement since the world began. There has never been a sin remitted by the great Judge of heaven until justice has been fully satisfied.

How, then, can a sinner be saved? This is the great riddle of the law and the grand discovery of the gospel. The answer is, “God’s justice has been fully satisfied through the substitution of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

He died “*the just for the unjust*” that He might bring us to God. Through the obedience and death of our Lord on our behalf, God can be just and justify the believer.

Free Agents But Not Free Wills

All men are *free agents* with the power to choose, act, and decide according to their character and nature! But, to say that man has a *free will* is to say that he has the power to act contrary to his own nature.

Our sinful natures have destroyed our will to do good and brought our wills into bondage and captivity to sin. Man's will is bound to, and determined by, his sinful nature. He has a will, but it is *not free*. It is the servant of sin. Only God in Christ can give a man the will to obey Him. *"Thy people shall be made willing in the day of THY POWER"* (Ps. 110:3).

The Miseries of the Rich

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you."

James 5:1-6

All prosperous people are not addressed here. There are some affluent people who truly love Christ, love others, and make good use of their material blessings for the glory of God, the preaching of the gospel, and the relief of human suffering.

The Apostle is writing to prosperous people who profess religion, assemble with the church, and are not rich toward God. They use most of what they have for their own pleasure, comfort, and whims. They lavish in material luxury, lay back treasures, and close their ears to the needs of God's family. To them James says, *"Weep for the miseries that shall come upon you."*

Let us all learn to be good stewards of grace in whatever form grace is given to us.

Committed to Christ

Am I truly committed to Christ? Anything less than total commitment can hardly be called salvation! “*You believe there is ONE GOD (and there’s much that this implies) you do well; the devils also believe what you believe and tremble.*”

I verily believe that there are a host of “part-time Christians”, “doctrinalists”, and “Calvinists” who have yet to learn the meaning of discipleship – commitment and a union with the Lord Jesus, which makes us all that we are and have, *His!*

“*To win Christ and be found in Him*” is more than believing some facts and holding to the doctrines of grace, disagreeing with today’s preachers, and listening to sermon tapes by grace preachers.

Four Fundamentals of Faith

- 1.) *A need* – Men and women come to Christ because they need Christ! “*The well have NO NEED...*” (Matt. 9:11-13).
- 2.) *The word* – Faith’s one foundation is the Word of God. We have no reason to believe anything except what God hath said. “*Faith cometh by hearing the Word*” (Rom. 10:17).
- 3.) *Christ* – The sole object of saving faith is Christ, our Lord. He, of God, is made unto us all things that we need. We believe, look, trust, and rest in *Him* (Col. 2:9-10).
- 4.) *Grace* – Both the will to believe and the power to believe are the gifts of God, “*not of works*” (Eph. 2:8-9).

The Lord Will Deliver Them That Are His

I do not panic nor despair in this world of religious paganism and corruption. The Lord knows how to deliver them that love Him and worship Him out of all trial and tribulation. Evil may abound, false teachers increase, and the true worship of the Lord may all but perish from the earth; but our God has a people who are chosen by Him, redeemed by His dear Son, and called by His Spirit.

He will keep them from falling, and He will keep them till the river rolls its waters at their feet. Then He will safely bear them over,

The Preaching of the Word

The preaching of the word of God by chosen servants of God is the ordained means for the conversion of His elect (1 Cor. 1:17-21). NOT that the Word *read* is not effectual; it certainly is. But the promise is especially concerning the *word preached and heard* (Rom. 10:17; Jn. 5:24).

This alone stresses the importance of a regular and faithful attendance where the gospel is preached. It ought also to burden the heart of the preacher to be serious and sincere before God in preaching the *gospel of Christ*.

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.”

“True love looks through a telescope; jealousy and envy, through a microscope.” -Henry Shaw

“Love that has nothing but beauty, gifts, and service to keep it in good health will soon drop dead.” -Erasmus

“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 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.

The Preaching That Honors Christ is the Preaching of Christ Himself

“He (the Holy Spirit) shall glorify ME; for He shall receive of mine and show it unto you.”

John 16:14

The Holy Spirit does not reach after something novel, new, or 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!

Strange as it may seem, there is today very little preaching of *Christ himself*. Men preach about those who knew Him, who served Him, and who wrote of Him. They preach His church, His doctrines, and His commandments. They preach series of messages on those who used to preach Christ, on the conduct and conversation of those who profess to know Christ, and on the duties and responsibilities of believers in Christ, but very few messages on the person and work of Christ Himself. They read papers and conduct discussions on ways to organize the kingdom of Christ, and how to honor Christ; and they seldom get around to doing that which God has ordained and commissioned us to do and that is *to preach Christ!*

Jesus Christ is most glorified, His sheep most edified, His will and purpose accomplished, and His church perfected in faith, hope, and love when we preach *Christ himself*. The work of the Spirit of God is to reveal to us the beauties of Jesus Christ, and they are all found in Christ Himself.

All of God and All of Grace

Thank God salvation is of the Lord; and whom He foreknew, He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, and whom He predestinated He called, justified, and glorified. This is salvation – of God and all of grace through the merits of Christ – a work *purposed*, a work *started*, a work *continued*, and a work *completed*.

The wise man wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:14, “*I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever. Nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it and God doeth it that men should fear Him.*”

Learning our Littleness

Samson boasted, “*With the jawbone of an ass I have slain a thousand men*” (Jud. 15:15-18). Then he thought that he would die for want of a drink of water. The mighty man whom God used so greatly is helpless for *lack of a little water!*

God has ways of teaching us our littleness, our nothingness, and our dependence on Him. We forget the crown on our heads when we have a splinter in our finger. God is reconciled to us in Christ and loves us but we are depressed because some earthly fool is out of sorts with us.

“O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrained to be!”

What Can I Do?

Recently I quoted Paul’s cry, “*Lord, what would you have me to do?*” A brother said to me, “I ask the Lord that same question, for I certainly want to serve Him and do His will; but what can I do? What is there to do?” My reply is:

1.) Doing the will and work of God is not always a physical or a material effort. They asked our Lord in John 6:28, “*What shall we do that we might work the works of God?*” Jesus answered, “*This is the work of God that ye BELIEVE on Him whom He hath sent.*” Genuine, sincere faith in Christ is doing the will of God (Heb. 11:6).

2.) Faithfulness to the gospel, to the Lord’s church, to the Lord’s people, and to our families is doing the will and work of God. “*Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found FAITHFUL*” (1 Cor. 4:2). Much can be said for the man or woman who fills his or her place regularly and faithfully and can be counted on in every situation to stand and, having done all, to *stand!*

3.) Dependable, enduring love for one another is fulfilling the commandments of our Lord. “*This is my commandment, that ye love one*

another as I have loved you.” Is not the whole law of God fulfilled in loving God and loving one another? There is nothing individuals need, churches need, or the kingdom of God requires more than genuine, faithful *love* which *“beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things.”* I may *do* many things according to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; but, if I have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

We Find All We Need in Christ

“We do not find rest, hope, nor comfort in our faith but in Christ.” If you will give careful thought to that statement, it will be of great help to you. Faith is not a foundation, a refuge, nor a source of help. Faith is the means; a look, an empty hand. It is Christ who is our refuge and who protects from every storm. He is our rock on which we build. He is our source for every mercy and our only plea.

My faith may be weak or weaker, but He cannot fail. If all my debts have been paid by my Surety, I don’t have to be ashamed to come before God. The praise and credit goes not to my boldness and faith but to my gracious benefactor! I am not debt-free because I believe (though I do, and that faith united me to Him) but because *He set me free and paid my debt.*

Christ is our confidence and our assurance. The moment I seek a reason for hope in anything I do, even in the blessed grace of faith, I forfeit any possibility of peace. *“Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust”* (Ps. 40:4). *“When Isaiah saw His glory, he spake of Him”* (Jn. 12:41).

When any man truly sees the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, then Christ becomes the message and the object of faith.

Ministers

The reason Christ gave us ministers of the gospel is for “*the perfecting of all believers*” (Eph. 4:12), for even the best of believers are imperfect. Our faith, love, knowledge, and obedience all need growth and maturity.

He gave ministers for “*the work of the ministry*”, to preach the gospel to the lost, to oversee the church, and to teach the things of Christ.

He gave ministers for “*the edifying of the body of Christ*”. We preach and teach to strengthen, build up, comfort, and give assurance to the people of God.

We preach and teach until all the elect come to saving faith and are united in their sentiments concerning Christ Jesus, the source and object of faith. We preach until all the elect come to a spiritual knowledge of Christ, behold His glory, and trust in Him. We are ambassadors of Christ on the trail of His sheep with the good news of deliverance.

Spiritual Life

I can't explain spiritual life except to say, “Cut into the new heart, and you'll find love for Christ; cut into the renewed mind, and you'll find thoughts of Christ; cut into the broken will, and you'll find the will of Christ.”

Cast All Your Care Upon Him

The apostle wrote, “*casting ALL your care upon Him for He careth for you.*” We know these trials are for our good and His glory. We know He does care and that we should cast them upon Him and *leave them there*, coming away rejoicing in the Lord.

But, too often, we don't act in heart upon what we know in our heads. I exhort you to do what the hymn-writer said,

“Take your burdens to the Lord
And *leave them there.*”

Commit Thy Way Unto The Lord

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

Psalm 37:5

Some of you are having great trouble and are walking a rough way. It may seem to you right now that these sorrows are more than you can bear. Indeed, they ARE more than you can bear; but you do not have to bear them alone. David said, “*Commit thy way unto the Lord*”, and Peter wrote, “*Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you*”.

You have committed your soul to Him; then you can surely trust Him with your home, children, and business. These things are far inferior to your immortal soul. He has promised us troubles in this world, but not without *His sufficient grace* to carry us through them.

Someone said, “There is no need for *two* to carry the burden when *one* of the two is the Lord of glory.” Joy cometh in the morning, just you wait and see. Romans 8:28.

Care Not for the Things of This World

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 thrashing 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 and in all spiritual matters.

Perfect in Him

There is nothing that will make a *needy sinner* look to Christ alone or a *believer* cling to, and rest in, Christ alone more than to realize that everything God is, everything that God requires, and everything that a sinner needs or will ever need is *in Jesus Christ*. We are perfect in Him!

He is perfect, and our being in Him makes us perfect (Col. 2:9-10). This is not speaking of what we shall be, but what we are right now in Christ before God.

The Spirit Gives Life to the Message

God's preachers do not go forth alone into the world to persuade sinners to believe, love, and come to Christ by their own logic, rhetoric, and power of persuasion. The Holy Spirit goes before them and with them to quicken, awaken, and give sinners eyes to see the beauties of Christ, ears to hear Him, and hearts to understand the gospel of grace and love the Redeemer (Ps. 110:3).

The bride has been chosen (2 Thess. 2:13), the servant will endure all things (2 Tim. 2:9-10), the bride will hear the voice of her beloved through the message of the servant (Jn. 10:23-30), and the bride will come (Jn. 6:37-40).

The Offering of Himself

What did Christ offer to God? He made a sacrifice of *Himself*. It is true that He sacrificed His rest, His honor, His reputation, and His life; but the essence of His sacrifice was *Himself*. *He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*" (Heb. 9:26). *"He His own self bore our sins in His body on the tree."*

By Himself He honored the law and enabled the Lawgiver to be just and merciful.

Believers Need no Signs

"Wherefore, tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that BELIEVE NOT; but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them that BELIEVE."

1 Corinthians 14:22

The power of the apostles and other early preachers to speak supernaturally in other languages is *not* a sign for believers (who need no miracle, either to gain their attention, or to confirm their faith); but these gifts and miracles bore witness before unbelievers that these men were sent from God and preached a message from heaven (Heb. 2:3-4; Jn. 3:2).

Inspired preaching and teaching, which interprets the divine will and purpose of God in Christ, serves to edify believers, not unbelievers, who must first be regenerated and given ears to hear.

Live in an Attitude of Thanksgiving and Prayer

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

The Apostle Paul says, “*Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing and give thanks to God in all things*” (1 Thess. 5:16-18). This is the will of God; that we rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks. What we are, what we have, where we are, and all that happens in the life of a believer are all according to the will of God for us.

Let us rejoice in prosperity or adversity and live in an attitude of thanksgiving and prayer, even when we have no particular request. Very ungrateful is the man who does not set so high a value on the love of God, the righteousness of Christ, and the hope of eternal life that he allows anything in this life to overshadow that wonderful gift of grace.

How can I murmur and complain when I am a child of the King of kings?

The Thread of Grace

Like a golden thread, the grace of God runs through the believer’s whole history, from his election in eternity past to the day he will stand before God, perfectly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus. There is no point in the existence or experience of a redeemed person where he does not say in sincerity, “I am what I am by the grace of God.”

Our election, our call, and our justification are by *grace*. Our strength in trial is His *grace*. Our prayers ascend to the throne of *grace*. We grow in *grace*, and we are stewards of the *grace* of God.

His Truth Marches On

It is to the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ that His cause and His gospel survive all the sins and follies of His people. Bro. Muse once said, "One of the proofs that the gospel is true is the fact that through the ages it has continued in spite of such poor preaching." Spurgeon wrote, "Taking ministers all round, I find them more likely to destroy than to build up the cause of Christ."

The Master's kingdom has survived the blunders of His disciples; His wisdom stands in spite of our folly; His power is not lessened by our weakness; and the glory of His righteousness has not been clouded by our unrighteousness.

The King of kings still conquers, using such poor followers and soldiers.

Acceptance With God

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might BRING US TO GOD."

1 Peter 3:18

How can I, a sinner, come to the holy, living God and find welcome, acceptance, and fellowship? How can I come to God so as to live my life here on earth in His communion and favor and, when I die, be received up to enjoy His glory forever? I can take the Scriptures and eliminate the many ways which men think will bring them to God.

- 1.) The *love of God* alone will not bring me to God. God is love and delights to show mercy, but God is also holy and righteous and will not show His love at the expense of His holiness. He will punish sin!
- 2.) The *law of God* will not bring me to God. "*By the law is the knowledge of sin,*" not its pardon nor forgiveness.

3.) The *church of God* will not bring me to God. The church is the body of those who have been brought to God.

In the Old Testament there were three essentials to coming to God to obtain favor, acceptance, and atonement. On the Day of Atonement the *high priest* came to the *tabernacle* with the *blood sacrifice* in his hand. There was a designated priest who came to the tabernacle (holy place) with the atoning blood. It is no different today!

Our tabernacle is Christ, who tabernacled among us. God will meet men and men will meet God only in Christ.

Our high priest is the lord Jesus, who is the one Mediator.

Our atonement is his own blood, by which He entered heaven itself and obtained for us full, complete, and eternal acceptance.

I do urge you who have any interest in knowing the Living God to come to Him by faith in Christ.