

1. Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan For the Year 1987

Submit

“God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble. Submit yourself, therefore, to God.”

James 4:6-7

The way to overcome pride, envy, and the spirit of carnal ambition is to submit yourselves 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 preeminence – our *Lord Jesus Christ!*

Let Demas be a Warning

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 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 lifestyle did not fit the humble lifestyle 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 Arminian will-worshippers 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.

Whatever it may have been, the Demas tribe continues with us!

His Will

To receive Christ as our Lord is to bow to *his will*. To walk with Christ is to walk with Him "*who worketh all things after the counsel of HIS OWN WILL.*" To plan my day is to say, "If the *Lord will*, we shall do this." To pray is to "*ask anything according to HIS WILL.*"

The Generosity of His People

I never ceased to be amazed at, and thankful for, the way the Lord continues to supply the needs of this ministry through His generous people. The sheep of Christ want the Word preached in a plain, straightforward manner which gives God the glory and shuts us up to His sovereign mercy in Christ.

This glorious Redeemer they love, His gospel they delight in, and His true messengers they will support, without pressure or coercion. God's people do not respond to offers of reward, for Christ alone is their reward; and they are not intimidated by threats, for there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

The Full Sum of our Preaching

“The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED” (1 Cor. 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 Him. 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.

What is Saving Faith?

What is saving faith? Over and over again Paul asserts that faith is *“believing God.”* Abraham believed that God was able to perform all that *he had promised*. Abraham believed God! Faith is simply believing God and thus believing *God’s word!* *“THY WORD IS TRUTH.”*

What God says about Himself, about our guilt, about His purpose of grace in Christ, about Christ’s person and work, is true. We agree with His Word, rely upon it, and act accordingly. This is faith!

Paul summed up the matter of faith when he stood upon the deck of that doomed ship 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.

The Only Way

How can a sinner approach God? How can a son of Adam come before God, be accepted and be forgiven? Only in the way which God has decreed – *no other way!*

This is not being too narrow nor radical, for the Scriptures declare this truth over and over. *“There is none other name...” “Other foundation can no man lay...” “No man cometh to the Father but by me.” “He that believeth not shall be damned.”*

Instead of insisting on another way, let us rejoice in His underserved mercy which provided *the way!* God has, in grace and mercy, purposed to show mercy to sinners in the only way consistent with His justice, truth, and love – the obedience and sacrifice of His only begotten Son (Rom. 3:19-26).

Pray for Neither Poverty nor Plenty

“Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food of my allowance; 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 my God in vain.”

Proverbs 30:8-9

Most of us have never known what it means to be in poverty and want, but have lived in reasonable comfort all our lives. If I or my children were hungry, cold, and forced to live in a one-room shack, I might put forth my hand and steal or even curse the providence of God. On the other hand, I have seen what money, fame, and power can do to a proud human heart. I'm not sure that I could deal with the temptation of a full purse.

My prayer, then, is like the above prayer of Agur, *“Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with what I really need and in your wise providence is best for me.”* I do not know which holds the greater temptation, poverty or plenty. I do know what's best for all of us – to have neither!

“Be content with what you have and avoid covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Contending for the Truth

Contending for the truth against the errors of modern religion is the duty of God’s servants. I hope our spirit is one of genuine love to all the chosen of God; but, today’s rule of charity, which requires us to keep silent on certain points in order to avoid controversy, I utterly despise.

It is treason to the Lord Jesus to be silent on any point where He has spoken and the honor of His gospel is concerned. It is easy on the flesh to deal in generalities, to denounce hyper-this or hyper-that, and to claim to be a friend to all; but, it is required of the loyal servant of King Jesus to maintain His crown-rights and to stand up for His gospel of glory and grace.

A Believer’s Peace

Where does a believer find real and genuine peace? On what foundation can we rest and say in truth, “It is well with my soul”? I’ll tell you; it lies in this – that we are justified by faith and not by works. Christ Jesus stood in my stead before God. I was guilty with nothing to pay, doomed to hell; and Christ took my place! He died for me! How can I perish? How can I be punished for sins which have already been laid on Christ and for which He has suffered?

God demands of me that I keep His holy law perfectly. I cannot do it. But Christ has kept it for me. He kept it, magnified it, made it honorable in my flesh. What more can God demand of me? I am washed in the blood of Christ Jesus; I am risen and seated at His right hand in Christ Jesus.

You may ask, “How is all this yours?” I reply, “By the grace of God, through the merits of Christ, revealed by the Spirit of God *through faith!*”

God said, *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.”* I do believe, I sincerely believe in Christ; therefore, I have eternal life.

Beware of Giving Comfort Before its Time

It is one of the most unwise things under heaven to comfort people who have not yet closed with Christ in heart faith. When people manifest an interest in the gospel and give an ear to our message, we must not allow our love for them and our zeal for their conversion to lead us to offer them rest when they need strong words to shut them up to Christ.

Any friendship with the pastor and church people which gives an unbeliever cheer, fellowship, and ease short of a union with Christ is dangerous. A sinner’s main business is to come to *Christ himself*, to love Christ, to rest in Christ. Then come church fellowship, rest, and the joys of the body.

There is no half-way house before believing in Him!

Wisdom in Death

“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 what others thought of me, but only of what *God thinks*. *“Oh, that I may win Christ and be found in Him.”*

Six Things Believers Will Do

- 1.) Believers so trust Christ as to renounce every other ground of confidence (Philippians 3:8).
- 2.) Believers glory only in the righteousness of Christ and count their own to be filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).
- 3.) Believers rejoice in the cross of substitution, glorying in nothing else (Galatians 6:14).
- 4.) Believers love the Lord Jesus supremely and will so order their lives as to avoid commitments and associations which hinder fellowship with Him (Luke 14:26-27).
- 5.) Believers will continue in the faith, for true believers never quit (1 John 2:19).
- 6.) Believers obey the Lord's commandments, not in order to gain His favor but because they love Him and dwell in His favor (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

Adorn the Doctrine of God

Paul exhorts us to "*adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour*" (Titus 2:10). We cannot adorn it with choirs and cantatas, for God's music exceeds any we can produce. Listen to the birds sing, the wind whisper through the pines, the water rippling over the rocks.

We cannot adorn it with steeples and great temples. God's universe is His house. Stand out under the stars with the flowers at your feet and the soft, gentle breeze moving the trees. We can build nothing worthy of His glory.

We cannot adorn it with our religious uniforms. The perfect man stood in Eden clothed only in God's holiness. Our clothes only disguise our

naked guilt. The gospel is best adorned when it is unadorned by our arguments and reasoning.

But 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. We can adorn it by an unselfish desire to make others happy, with a generous hand, and a peaceful disposition.

His Truth Matches On

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 unholiness, and His grace shines in spite of our selfishness. Men who look to Him are never disappointed.

The End is Greater than the Means

The ultimate end or goal of redemption is not the happiness, well-being, or even conversion of sinners, *but the glory of God* (Eph. 1:6,12,14). Man's comfort and safety is not the supreme goal of God's glorious gospel. The supreme goal of our gospel is the glory of God, the establishment of His rule and reign over a kingdom of peace and righteousness, the exaltation and manifestation of His character, and the preeminence of His beloved Son. Our salvation will serve that purpose (Phil. 2:6-11).

Everything in covenant mercies, in salvation, and in God's purpose for the sons of men (past, present, and future) turns upon the will of God in Christ. This makes *Christ the principal figure* in our gospel, our goals, and our glory. But, if you have salvation and God's purpose waiting upon the freewill of the creature, then *man* is the principal figure in your landscape and will lead you to compromise divine truth in order to win man's approval.

The attitude that we must get men converted at any cost and compromise usually winds up costing the very character and truth of God, which is a price too high to pay. Conversions are never more important than truth. Truth is always more important than results. *“Let God be true and every man a liar!”*

All of Grace

“I am what I am by the grace of God.” I am one of God’s elect; my election is of grace. I am redeemed from the curse of the law; redemption is all of grace from beginning to end. I am kept and secure, but He keeps me by His grace.

If there is anything about me that is commendable or useful to God or men, it is not I, but Christ and His grace in me. I have joy within and comfort of soul regarding death, judgement, and eternity; but this hope is *all of grace!*

“Grace taught my soul to pray,
And made my eyes o’erflow;
‘Twas grace that kept me to this day,
And will not let me go.”¹

We Have an Advocate

“And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

1 John 2:1

This scripture recognizes our frail, sinful, human nature. A believer does not love sin, does not excuse nor justify sin, but grieves over sin and

¹Doddridge, Philip & Toplady, Augustus. *Grace ‘tis a Charming Sound.* Hymns, &c, by J. Orton. London 1755.

desires to be without sin. Yet he owns and confesses his sin! As Spurgeon once said, “Sin is my name, sin is my nature; and to deny it is to deny the Word, deceive myself, and call God a liar. My old nature is such that I will sin until I die, for sin even pollutes the best thing I do.”

This scripture encourages the believer to trust and hope in the mercy of God *at all times!* It does not say, “If any man is holy, prayerful, and always faithful, he has an advocate”; but, it says, “*If any man SIN, he has an advocate with the Father.*” It does not say, “If any man sins, he forfeits his right to Christ’s advocacy.” Grace that can be forfeited because of human failure is not grace at all. Mercy that is conditioned upon the merit of the creature is not mercy at all. If my title to glory rests upon my works, either *before or after* conversion, it is a total failure.

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!*

Truth and Nothing but the Truth

If sinners are not saved by the preaching of the truth of Christ, they will not be saved by the telling of lies. If “*all the counsel of God*” (His character, our condition, Christ’s person and work) has no effect on sinners, our toning down the truth or mixing it with human works will not bring them to God.

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.

Be Not Discouraged

Persecution and opposition ought to encourage us rather than to discourage us, for we are faithfully warned by our Lord that the natural man and the religionist will not receive the gospel of the grace of God.

True Beauty

For public worship (or for that matter, anywhere) believers (men and women) should be dressed in apparel which is not conspicuous, showy, extreme, or suggestive. Those who worship God should not adorn themselves in such a way as to attract undue attention, encourage conversation about their vanity, nor to display their wealth.

Every believer must realize, from God's Word, that our one grand objective is to glorify Christ and that *true beauty* and attractiveness is not the adornment of the body but the *right ordering of the heart!*

Is any Sick Among You?

James 5:14-15

"Is any sick among you?" The bodies of believers (as well as others) are liable to a variety of diseases.

"Let him call for the elders of the church." This may mean those who hold that office by the authority of the church or the older men of the church, sound in faith and experience.

"And let them pray over him." Let these men pray for his comfort, for his recovery, and for the grace of God to strengthen him in his need.

"Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." Some suggest that this means to use ordinary medicine as well as prayer. Some suggest that anointing with oil should not be done since the extraordinary gift of healing, given

to the apostles, has ceased. Others say that the anointing with oil is symbolic of the Spirit of God and should be applied as this scripture commands. But whether we use medicine, anoint with oil, or do not anoint with oil, let us pray for the sick and let our prayers and desires go forth in the name of Christ, for the glory of Christ, and according to the will of our Lord Jesus.

We cannot say that God will heal everyone for whom we pray. It may be His will for that person to die or to bear the affliction longer, for his good and for God's glory. But, when we pray, let it be *"the prayer of faith"*; for we can certainly say that faithless prayer will not be heard (Heb. 11:6).

The End of All Things

The ultimate end of all things that come to pass, including the ultimate end of the great drama of redemption, is found in the glory of the eternal God.

Here is Love

To find love you need to seek one whose heart and soul is full of love. John, the beloved, looks over all space, time, history, and men, and finally, his eye comes to rest in one place; and he says, *"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 Jn. 4:10).

There is water in a thousand places, like the drops of dew on a flower; but, when one discovers the ocean, he says, "Here is water." There is light here and light there; but, when one looks at the sun, he says, "Here is light."

So the Apostle does not point to his own heart, nor to the church, nor even to a devoted mother and say, "Here is love:" for that love is but a little pool filled from the great sea and reflected light from the sun of

love. He looks to our heavenly Father and the unspeakable gift of His affection; and he says, *“herein is love.”*

Confessing Christ

Our Lord said, *“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven”* (Mt. 10:32). What is it to confess Christ?

1.) It is to have an understanding in the mind of *who* Christ is, *what* Christ did, and *where* Christ is. *“The Son of God has come and given us an understanding...”*

2.) It is to believe Christ in the heart (Rom. 10:9-10), to receive Christ with a sincere and genuine heart love, and committal as Lord and Saviour as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

3.) It is to confess Christ openly and publicly in believer’s baptism. *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”* Baptism does not save nor add anything to the Saviour’s work; but it is a confession of, identification with, and testimony of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord, and our own death to sin and resurrection to walk with Him.

4.) It is identification with the church of our Lord Jesus, the people who love Him, and the preachers who preach His gospel of free and sovereign grace. Paul said to Timothy, *“Be not ashamed of the testimony (gospel) of our God, nor of me His servant, but be ready yourself to partake (be identified) of the afflictions of the gospel.”* Where the gospel is preached, where the true people of God meet to worship, where the name of Christ is worshipped and exalted, there I want to be! And if I truly love Christ and confess Christ, there *I will be!*

5.) It is to speak of Christ daily in conversation, prayer, and as a faithful witness.

His Resurrection and Our Regeneration

The power of God that quickened us and made us to live spiritually is, in the Scriptures, compared with that power which raised Christ from the dead. Christ died for our sins and was raised for our justification. We live because He lives; and we are free from sin because our Surety, who bore our sins, is now free from them. But there is a likeness between His resurrection and our regeneration and quickening.

- 1.) His resurrection is called a begetting. He is the first-begotten from the dead. Our regeneration is called a begetting (1 Pet. 1:3).
- 2.) His human body was lifeless in the grave, as natural men are dead in sin and without spiritual life.
- 3.) His human body could not raise itself, as we cannot give ourselves life.
- 4.) His resurrection was the pure, unaided work of God, as is our regeneration (Eph. 2:1).
- 5.) His resurrection led to His exaltation at the right hand of God and is where, in our representative, Jesus Christ, we are already seated (Eph. 2:6).

Put on the New Man

To “*put on the new man*” is certainly 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 and avoid not only the works of evil but the very appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).

Christ Our Righteousness

“*Jehovah, our righteousness.*” Christ in His life on earth was so righteous that we may say of that life, taken as a whole, that it is *the righteousness of God himself*. And it is in this righteousness that every believer appears before God.

“Bold shall we stand in that great day,
For who ought to our charge shall lay?”²

We Come to a Person

I hear men talking about coming to faith in Christ. Without being contentious wouldn't it be more accurate to say, “*I came to Christ* in faith”? Faith comes to us as the gift of God, through the work of God's Spirit and the Word of God; and by faith and in faith *we come to Christ!* Christ is the fountain, Christ is our life, Christ is made unto us all things – wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We do not find these things in faith but *in Christ*.

As Bonar said in his great hymn,

“I came to Jesus as I was,
weary, worn, and sad;
I found *in him* a resting place,
And *He* has made me glad.”³

Also men say, “I came to the doctrines of grace.” One can come to a doctrine or even learn a system of doctrine and never come to Christ. You may weary of hearing me say it, but salvation is not in a decision, profession of faith, mental acceptance of facts, nor the letter of the law. Salvation is in a person!

²Zinzendorf, Count Nicolaus Ludwig von. *Jesus, the Lord our Righteousness*. Translated by John Wesley.

³Bonar, Horatius. *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say*. 1846.

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 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).

Once

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

Hebrews 9:27-28

As men die just once and face judgement but once, so Jesus Christ was *once offered* to bear the sins of many. They are paid for and put away; and unto all who believe and look to and for Him, shall He appear without sin unto eternal glory.

Accepted and Seated

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, crucified in our stead, arose on the third day, and ascended to the heavens, where He is seated on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.

He is *seated*, which shows that *His work is done*. He is on the *right hand*, which shows that *His work is accepted*. He is possessed of honor, glory, and authority. And we are accepted and seated in Him.

Put on Love

“Above all things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts.”

Colossians 3:14-15

The most necessary grace is love. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 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 that comes from the indwelling Christ will actually rule our hearts, deciding and settling all 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!

Come in Sackcloth With a Rope About Your Neck

Ahab may have sinned against God in sparing the wicked Benhadad, whom God had appointed to destruction, but the faith of these enemies in the mercy of the King of Israel and the way that they came before him (in sackcloth with ropes around their necks) is still a good lesson for all guilty sinners who seek the mercy of God (1 Ki. 20:31-32).

Come, sinner, come to God in the sackcloth of repentance, with a rope about your neck, justifying God's right to destroy you, and owning your just condemnation (Lk. 23:39-43). God is plenteous in mercy to those who seek mercy, but the proud He will send away empty. Death, the wages of sin, we have justly earned and deserve; but *the gift of God* is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

Do Not Praise Yourself

We have no reason at any time to glory in ourselves nor in our works, but only to thank, praise, and give glory to God who is pleased to redeem such worthless creatures and to use us in some way to accomplish His purpose. Matthew Henry once said, “As much against the grain as it is for a proud man to acknowledge his infirmities, so much is it against the grain of a child of God to speak in his own praise.”⁴

It is not the man who praises and commends himself who is approved and accepted, but it is the person whom God accepts and approves in Christ. “*Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips*” (Prov. 27:2).

We Must Have a Mediator

If the Lord Jesus had not taken our nature and stood before God for us, the justice of God would not and could not have spared us. When He was numbered with the transgressors and bore our sins, justice did not spare Him (Rom. 8:32).

Luther saw this and cried, “I will have nothing to do with an absolute God”; that is, with God outside of Christ. Woe forevermore to that man or woman who meets a just and holy God without a mediator.

The Purpose and Use of the Law

“The law is not made for a righteous man but for the lawless and disobedient.”

1 Timothy 1:9

No man is righteous in himself. The righteous man here intended is the man who believes God with the heart unto righteousness and who lays hold of Christ’s righteousness by faith, which causes him to live soberly,

⁴Henry, Matthew. *Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Exposition on 2 Corinthian 11. London: 1706.

righteously, and godly in this world. The law of God does not lie upon him as a weight and a burden, forcing him into a way of life which he does not enjoy! He delights in the law of God, and God's commandments are not grievous to him. He is a new creature in Christ, and his deepest desire is to know Christ, obey Christ, and glorify Christ in conversation and conduct.

The gospel no more excuses sin than the law does; what is contrary to one is contrary to the other. But it is not the law which motivates the believer, keeps him from lying, stealing, killing, and committing adultery, nor makes him generous, loving, and faithful. It is the nature of God within him; it is his love for Christ and holiness.

He does not worship, love, and give because he is *commanded* to do so; he does it *because he wants to!* Laws are enacted to control and convict the lawless and disobedient.

Our Conversation

Let our conversation be seasoned with grace and language which is spiritually beneficial to others. Let us avoid unwholesome words, so much worthless talk, gossip, and *excessive levity*. Laughter is enjoyable and good humor is wholesome, but too much foolishness and levity is *offensive* and damaging to our message and witness.

The Limits of Self-Righteousness

There are three things that self-righteousness can never do; it can never honor the divine law, it can never satisfy divine justice, and it can never quiet a guilty conscience.

Five Searching Questions

- 1.) Are my desires for a saving interest in Christ genuine and sincere? He accused some of following Him because of miracles and for loaves and fishes. I would win Christ!
- 2.) Are my desires for a saving interest in Christ honoring to Him? I would be saved only in that way which honors His law and satisfies His justice – the way of the cross!
- 3.) Are my desires for Christ permanent or only a passing fancy born of emotion? A true desire for Christ has nothing to do with health or wealth, time or trouble, feelings or flesh; it is a heart quest.
- 4.) Do my desires for Christ lead me to seek Him in His Word, in His house, and among His people? I am not ashamed of the gospel, those who preach it, nor those who believe it. I would be identified with Him and His.
- 5.) Will my desire for Christ find no full satisfaction until I awake with His likeness? If so, I may entertain a good hope that I am an object of His love.

Abide in Me

It is true that once a man is saved by God's grace through faith, he will remain saved forever; yet the Scriptures are full of warnings to believers against unbelief (Heb. 3:12-14), against drawing back (Heb. 10:38-39), and against neglecting the Word of God (Heb. 2:1-3).

Abiding in Christ is abiding in His *word*, abiding in His *love*, and abiding in His *spirit* and in *faith*. This abiding in Christ is *not* a condition which a man fulfills before receiving life, but abiding in Christ is a result of Christ's gift of life and is true evidence that we have the life of Christ.

Branches on a grapevine do not bear fruit by themselves but from the vine and as a result of their union with the life-giving vine. Neither can

any man bear, produce, nor possess any spiritual knowledge, life, gift, grace, or holiness except through Christ's abiding in Him and *his abiding in Christ*.

The Foolishness of Preaching

There are three reasons why the preaching of the cross is foolishness to natural men.

- 1.) It deals with a subject in which they have no interest – the pardon of *sin*.
- 2.) It does not recognize human merit, works, nor righteousness.
- 3.) It reveals how God can be just and justifier, something they have never considered.

Christ, All Our Righteousness

When we review the fall of man in the garden, we discover how great was that fall and how infinite was our loss. We became corrupt, dying creatures; once strong, now weak; once healthy, now sick; once always living, now always dying. Pain, sorrow, sickness, and death is our lot. We lost happiness and became creatures of fear, shame, hate, and greed. We can't live alone and we can't live together. We lost fellowship with God; our sins have separated us from His presence and His favor. We are not dying men spiritually; we are dead men!

But underlying the whole matter is the sobering truth that in the fall man lost his righteous nature. God made man upright; but man became a sinner, a transgressor, a rebel, and an ungodly creature.

We have changed; oh, how we have changed; but God has not changed. The Lord is still the same in holiness, justice, and truth. What he *has* required, He *still* requires. He demands of the creature what He must

demand. He commands what men cannot produce – *A perfect righteousness!* Who shall stand in His presence? *“He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.”* What doth the Lord require of us? What He has always required – to fear God, to walk in *all* His ways, to love God and to serve Him in perfection with all thy heart and soul!

This is impossible! Of course it is, with you and me, but not with Christ. The Lord Jesus in the flesh fulfilled all that the Father required and satisfied His holy justice perfectly for all who believe. Jeremiah called Him *“The Lord our Righteousness”*. Righteousness cannot be found in us, nor in our works, nor in the law; but it is found in Christ. *“I find no fault in Him”* declares heaven, earth, and hell.

Oh, that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is but filthy rags; but, with His spotless garment on, I am as holy as His dear Son!

Three Significant Things From John 6:51

- 1.) *“I am the living bread.”* He is the living God, who is life, who ever lives, and who gives life to dead sinners.
- 2.) *“The bread that I will give is my flesh.”* To give His flesh was to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin.
- 3.) *“I will give myself for the life of the world.”* Not Jews only but for sinners of every nation; *“and if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.”*

The 7000 Club

Oh Lord of the harvest, raise up true and faithful laborers, preachers and pastors. Laborers who are not concerned for worldly honor, gain, nor possessions, but for the spiritual welfare of their hearers, the glory of God, and the preeminence of Jesus Christ. Laborers who fear neither men of the world nor men of the church, who fear not loneliness nor

failure, whose only fear is *“the fear of the Lord”*. Laborers who know how to be abased and how to abound, how to live with poverty and plenty, and to treat those two imposters as the same. Laborers who are *complete in Christ* and *content with Christ*, and who are quite determined to preach Christ and Him crucified. Laborers who love their Master and have no complaint with where they labor nor how long they labor and are willing to leave the harvest in His hands.

Are we as destitute for true laborers as it seems? Is the famine of hearing the Word of God as wide-spread as it appears? Oh God, where are *The 7000* who have *“not bowed their knee to Baal nor kissed him with their mouths”*? (1 Ki. 19:18).

This is truly the order: first, *the knee* buckles under the strain of fear, opposition, criticism, loneliness, and trial; then *the mouth* follows with soft words of compromise and smooth intellectual words of man’s wisdom, which lessens the offense of the cross.

Oh, to be a member of *The 7000 Club!*

Submit Yourselves to God

“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit yourself therefore to God.”

James 4:6-7

The way to overcome pride and defeat the spirit of envy, strife, and contention is to *submit yourselves to god*.

- 1.) To His will regarding gifts, natural or spiritual.
- 2.) To leave it to God to make us what He would have us to be.
- 3.) To leave it to God to prosper or empty us.
- 4.) To leave it to God to honor or humiliate us.

Resist thoughts of envy, jealousy, covetousness, and fretting, and submit yourselves to God. Our Lord is mindful of our needs and will supply (Phil. 4:19).

Believe Him

Our Lord declares, "*Ye must be born again.*" He also said to the same man, "*As Moses lifted up the serpent, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*"

Believe on Christ and you are born again! That act of faith is a clear indication that the new birth has taken place. There is a vital and wonderful connection between the preached word, the new birth, and believing on Christ which makes them inseparable.

My business is to preach the true gospel; yours is to *believe Him!* Will you? Can you? You can if you will.

Shun All Superstition

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.

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.

Preach Christ, Not About Him

The tendency of men, if left alone, is to drift father from God; and preachers are no exception. If left alone, they depart from preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ and begin to major on other things. It was true in the early days of the church. For the first few years after our Lord ascended, Christ was preached; but, gradually preachers and churches began to preach works, ceremony, law, and tradition. Read the epistles of Corinthians and Galatians.

It is no different today. Where can you go and hear Christ preached? Men preach *about* the gospel and doctrines about Christ, but John called our gospel “*the doctrine OF Christ*”, not the doctrine *about* Christ.

It would be easy to give the sum and substance of Paul’s message; it was *Jesus Christ and him crucified!* If you had asked Paul his creed, he would have said, “My creed is Christ.” If you had inquired as to his body of divinity, he would have replied, “There is but one body of divinity – *IN HIM dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*”

To these apostles Christ was not a historical character, 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.*

Four Lessons to Learn

Isaiah evidently learned much from the death of king Uzziah. He said, “*In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord; I saw myself and I saw the condition of the people*” (Isa. 6:1-6).

1.) *God is holy!* Our God is infinitely, indescribably holy in all His ways, acts, and nature. He will in no wise clear the guilty nor receive any man apart from perfect holiness. He will not speak to, nor be spoken to by, any sinful creature. He is unapproachable except through the Mediator.

2.) *Men are sinners!* “*There is none that doeth good, no not one.*” There is none righteous. “*Your sins have separated you and your God.*” “*Every imagination of the heart of man is evil continually.*”

3.) *There is a way to God!* Our God, in mercy and grace, has determined to redeem, sanctify, and receive a people out of every tribe, kindred, and tongue; but, only in the way consistent with His holiness, righteousness, and truth. He will be both just and justifier; He will be both merciful and righteous; He will be a just God and a Saviour (Isa. 45:20-25).

4.) *Christ is the way!* Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, came to earth made of woman, made under the law to redeem. He is our *surety* by divine decree; He is our *righteousness* by perfect obedience; He is our *sacrifice, sin-offering, and atonement* by death; He is our risen *justifier* and our *Great High Priest* who intercedes at God’s right hand. No man cometh to God but by, in, and through Christ Jesus (Jn. 14:6).

What Think Ye of Christ?

The question is asked, “*What think ye of Christ?*” The question has to do with *thoughts*, not words, written creeds, or religious traditions. The question has to do with *your thoughts*, not of your church, your preachers, nor the old writers; but what do *you* think of Jesus Christ.

A person’s salvation depends on his *thoughts* of Christ; his thoughts of Christ depend upon his *understanding* of the person and work of Christ; and his understanding of Christ depends on what he has *heard, learned, and been taught* of Christ by the Father (Jn. 6:44-45).

Tell me what you think of Christ Jesus, and I will tell you what you believe about the character of God, the condition of men, and the way God saves sinners. Tell me what you think of Christ Jesus and you reveal whether you understand and believe the gospel of a “*just God and a Saviour*”.

Happiness

“Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust.”

Psalm 40:4

David is saying, “Oh, the happiness of the man who makes the Lord Jesus his refuge and trust.” Oh, the happiness of the man who can say with Job, *“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him”*; who can say with Peter, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”*; who can say with John, *“We know that we have passed from death to life”*.

That man may be as poor as Lazarus, as tried as Job, as lonely as Elijah, as persecuted as Paul, and as sick as Epaphroditus; but, if God is his trust, none of these outward afflictions can keep him from being happy. *“Happy is the man to whom God will not charge sin.”*

Tie The Scarlet Line

In most circles it is unfashionable to believe in the old gospel of substitution and atonement. “Modern culture” and intellectualism have altered the Bible and religion until there is no real sin-offering and sacrifice left. The blood of His cross and the obedience of His life are only examples now, and not a propitiation, payment, nor imputed righteousness.

As for me, I tie the scarlet line in my window; I put the blood on my door; I stand amazed as my great High Priest enters within the veil with His own blood to make atonement for my soul. In the midst of a thousand “new gospels” that aren’t worth the breath it takes to preach them, I hold in my heart and soul to the gospel of God concerning His Son, who was wounded for my transgressions, bruised for my iniquities, and by whose stripes I am healed.

Like Rahab of old, tie the scarlet line in your window. If no one else sees it, *God will!* If no one else is pleased – *God is!*

“Ere since by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be ‘til I die.”⁵

Controversy

Controversy is never a happy element for the child of God. He would far rather be in sweet fellowship than engaged in the defense of the faith. But, as a soldier, he has learned to obey; and the rule of his obedience is not his personal comfort, but his Lord’s command, his Lord’s gospel, and his Lord’s glory. Attack any of these and he will do battle.

Look Only to Him

We must look to Christ and Christ alone as the propitiation for our sins, and be careful that our faith is single and fixed only on Him. I have known preachers to emphasize a sense of sin and repentance to the point that some of their hearers find a sort of rest in their guilt, conviction, and feelings of unworthiness. *It is Christ who gives us rest*; it is not being the chief of sinners that gives us rest.

I realize that those who come to Christ will indeed acknowledge their sins, will experience a genuine repentance before God, and will believe the gospel; but none of these things contribute in any way to the removal of sin nor to the redemption of the soul. This is the work of *Christ alone*. *“When He had BY HIMSELF purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the majesty in heaven.”*

It is the Son of Man lifted up who heals. How *long* you have suffered, how *severe* the wound, and how *great* the pain has nothing to with the *cure!* Look to Him and be made whole.

⁵Cowper, William. *There is a Fountain Filled With Blood*. Conyer’s Collection of Psalms and Hymns. London: 1772.

Do You Love Him?

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 hearts and thoughts, and replied, “*Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.*”

This is the *vital issue* for all professed Christians; “Do you love Christ?” It is not, do you love the sovereignty of God, the doctrine, the Bible, the church, or even the people of God (though you certainly will love all these 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).

Number the Days

Richard Baxter once said, “I preach as one who may never preach again, and as a dying man to dying men.” We need to learn the all-important lesson, “*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement,*” and live our days in Christ, awaiting His call.

It is so foolish to set our affection on a dying world and its short-lived comforts and relationships. Ryle said, “For a moment of time, men lose a glorious eternity.” We are toiling and wearying ourselves about trifles, running to and fro like ants on a hill to build that which shall soon crumble, not realizing that in a few years we shall all be gone and another generation will fill our place. “*Lord, teach ME to number my days that I may apply my heart to WISDOM.*”

How Sinful are We?

We can read the Scriptures which declare, “There is none good, no not one...every imagination of man’s heart is only evil continually...our

righteousnesses are filthy rags...man at his best state is vanity”; but what makes this question difficult to answer is the fact that we have such little understanding of true holiness. We compare ourselves with ourselves and arrive at a weak, perverted view of sin. A man’s conception of sin is determined by his understanding of *true holiness*. I declare, without reservation, that a man will never come to an understanding of the exceeding sinfulness of sin until he sees the holiness and righteousness of the Lord God!

Job was an honest, upright, and righteous man in his own eyes until he saw the Lord; and then he cried, *“I abhor myself.”* Isaiah put a *“woe”* on everyone else until he saw the Lord; and then he cried, *“Woe is ME, I am undone.”*

Until preachers begin to preach the true character of our God in His awesome holiness, justice, and righteousness, men will not be convicted of sin, righteousness, and judgement and will continue in their efforts to establish a righteousness of their own, denying the necessity of a *redeemer*, who alone can enable God to be both just and justifier (Rom. 3:25-26).

Depart from Iniquity

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His. And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

2 Timothy 2:19

The doctrines of grace in the head are worth very little if the fruit of grace is not evident in our walk.

Giving

At this time of the year much is said about gifts and giving. Almost everyone will be giving and receiving gifts during the next few days. Here are a few words in reference to the subject.

- 1.) The ability to give properly is a *grace*. “*See that ye abound in this grace also*” (2 Cor. 8:7).
- 2.) The gifts God owns and blesses are given from a *cheerful* and *willing* heart (2 Cor. 8:12; 9:7), “*not of necessity*,” but motivated by the love and example of our generous Lord.
- 3.) The value and size of the gift is totally immaterial in the sight of God as long as it reflects *the ability of the giver* (2 Cor. 8:12). “*It is accepted according to that a man HATH, and not according to that he HATH NOT.*” We give as God enables us to give.
- 4.) “*FREELY ye have received, FREELY give*” (Mt. 10:8). The world talks of “exchanging gifts”; the believer gives “*hoping for nothing in return*”, but with thanksgiving to God “*for His UNSPEAKABLE gift.*” You may think me to be radical, but a man’s *deeds* of generosity and sacrifice tell me more of his spiritual state than his *words* can ever convey. Who said, “What you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you are saying”?⁶

⁶Variouly attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson.