

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan For the Year 1979

A Saviour Born

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

Luke 2:11

This is the good news, that the Saviour born is none other than Christ, the Lord. There is no good news if He is not the Lord God! It is not good news that a great prophet is born. Moses was a great prophet but he is dead. It is not good news that another priest is born. Aaron was a great high priest but others have taken his place by reason of death. It is not good news that a good king is born, David was a good king but he sleeps even as do the wicked kings. But if you tell me that the one born in Bethlehem is none other than the eternal God Who is Prophet, Priest and King — that is good news! He ever lives to make intercession. He eternally reigns with all authority. He will never leave not forsake me. If, the God-Man is my Saviour — that is good news!

The Hope of Righteousness

"We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

Galatians 5:5

We are in the habit of saying, "There are only two classes of people in the world; those who are saved and those who are lost: those who have accepted Jesus Christ and those who haven't. I suppose that this is actually true, but oversimplifying the great work of justification and regeneration has led to some great errors.

1. The error of *easy believism* and *decisionism*. Men walk the aisle, make a decision and rest in this refuge.
2. The error of the *carnal Christian* theory. One accepts Jesus as Saviour and later on, if convenient, makes Him Lord of his life.

3. The error of *carnal security*. If one has made a decision for Christ at sometime in his life, he is eternally secure and can never be lost.

4. The error of *religious exhibitionism*. "I've found it" is shouted from the bumper of his car. "It's fun being saved" is pinned to his lapel. Tomorrow he may get mad and quit, but today he is "gung ho" for Jesus!

The Lord has hedged us about on the one side with precious promises lest we despair and the other with strong warnings lest we presume! Oh for the marks of a real work of grace, the evidences of real revival, when men and women who are being saved walk before God in humility, in faith, in meaningful confession of sin and with a broken heart and contrite spirit. "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." (Gal. 5:5).

"Here I raise mine ebenezer—
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope by Thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home."

Better to press with strong desire into the kingdom than to sleep with the foolish virgins in the lap of presumption, and to hear the door shut while we hunt oil!

No Condemnation In Christ

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

John 3:18

When a man believes in and receives the Lord Jesus Christ, he is justified before God so completely that he is as though he had never sinned at all! Actually, he is in a much better position than if he had never sinned; for if he had never sinned he would have the righteousness of man and still be subject to fall. But in Christ by faith, he is made the righteousness of God eternally. That thief on the cross was as black as Hell—he believes on Christ, and is in that moment as white as Heaven's own purity. "With

His spotless garments on, we are holy as God's own Son." This is the glory of the grace of God in Christ. Christ does not take away a part of our sins, but all of them. Christ does not remove sin partially, but entirely. Christ does not blot out sin for a little while, but eternally. There is in Christ "No spot, wrinkle, or any such thing." We are holy and without blame — faultless!

Let us never be ashamed to declare in no uncertain terms, "*He that believeth on Him is not condemned.*" This glorious message of free grace: of justification by faith, needs no defense. It does not need to be protected by feeble flesh — it only needs to be preached! By the time we filter the gospel through our conditions, our requirements, our evidences, our examinations, and our councils to receive members, it does not come out justification by faith at all, but justification and sanctification by works.

"My sins 0 the bliss of that glorious thought

My sins, not in part, but the whole,

Are nailed to the cross

And I bear them no more

Praise the Lord, it is well with my soul."

There is a certain truth, that trust in God and prayer always go together. "Trust in Him at all times, ye people; pour out your hearts before Him." If the heart be set on God our communication with Him will be frequent.

"Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled"

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

John 14:1

We have here a royal command. Do not give way to despair, depression, doubts and fears, for a troubled heart is dishonoring to our heavenly Father.

(1) It puts a question mark on His love. "Nothing good will He withhold from them that fear Him." His love designs and desires eternal good for His children.

(2) It puts a question mark on His providence. "We know that all things work together for good to them who love Him, who are the called according to His purpose." Though Job lost all, he did not charge God with foolishness.

(3) It puts a question mark on His promises. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "Lo, I am with you always." "If ye being evil know how to give good things to your children how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him."

(4) It robs us of the joys and blessings God has given us. When I am murmuring and complaining about what I want which I do not have, I am overlooking the great mercies and blessings I do possess. It may be true that I do not have all that I want but I have much more than I deserve. My circumstances may not be as good as I want them to be, but neither are they as bad as they could be.

Besides the royal command, we have the cure for heart trouble. It is faith! "*Let not your heart be troubled — ye believe in God, believe also in Me.*" There is no want He cannot supply; there is no sickness He cannot heal; there is no danger He cannot prevent; there is no misery He cannot remove; there is no sin He cannot forgive; there is no enemy He cannot defeat. Christ is God in our nature — so near at hand and so accessible to our faith. David said in Psa. 42:5 — "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Rope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.*"

CONFESSING CHRIST

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father. which is in heaven."

Matthew 10:32

Are men correct in thinking that because they made a profession of faith some years back, were baptized, joined a local church and adopted a sound system of theology, they are confessing Christ before men. We are going to find out someday, to our eternal woe, that confessing Christ before men involves a great deal more than an isolated decision. Confessing Christ before men is a constant identification with Christ in a

world that does not know or love Christ. To be identified with Christ is to be so closely associated with Him that His interests are your interests; His friends are your friends; His enemies are your enemies; His glory is your glory; His will is your will; and His Word is your rule of life. "*Where I am, there ye may be also*" John 14:3. Where is Christ? Those confessing Him and identified with Him will be there also!

We are crucified with Christ, buried with Him in baptism, walking with Him in the light of the Scripture, righteousness and truth, at His feet in humility, assembled with His people in worship and praise, bearing His reproach, forgiving as He forgave, loving as He loved, and waiting for His return. In other words confessing Christ before men is to be so closely associated with Christ that one is called in truth by others — *A Christian!*

JUSTIFICATION

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Romans 3:28

The greatest sinner, whatever his past sins or present infirmities, or future problems; any son of Adam, Jew or Gentile, black or white, old or young; can be freely and completely justified before the most high God — all his sins pardoned, blotted out and forgotten by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith in Christ that sinner has a perfect holiness before God.

To state this so positively upsets many well-meaning religious people. We are told by them that it is dangerous doctrine which may lead men to live in sin while professing to be saved by Christ. They add: A man can be saved by faith in Christ; if he is genuinely convicted of sin, if he has mourned apart, if he has repented sufficiently, if he is scripturally baptized, if he abstains from worldliness, if he holds the correct doctrine, if he does not succumb to any great sin!

Brethren, I don't know who appointed us guardians of the promises of God or watchdogs of His grace but the scriptures plainly says, "*Be that believeth on the Son of God bath eternal life.*" I plan to leave it right there,

adding nothing and taking nothing away. Jesus Christ is the all-sufficient Saviour and he that believeth on Him is not condemned. I also add that this matter of justification by faith is the article by which a church — a minister and a professor of Christianity stands or falls. There is no bridge between merit and mercy. They are as far apart as the poles and never the twain shall meet.

The Comforter

Christ said, *"If I go not away the Comforter will not come."*

John 16:7

By going away Christ refers to His death, resurrection and intercession. He goes to open the way for us into the holiest, to take possession of heaven in our stead, and to intercede for us. If He does not do this, there is no reason for the Holy Spirit to come. He would have no blood to sprinkle, no salvation to apply, no gospel to reveal, no righteousness to bring and no comfort to give.

"Come Holy Spirit, heavenly dove,
With all Thy quickening power,
Kindle a flame of sacred love,
In these cold hearts of ours."

THE INWARD CHANGE THAT TAKES PLACE

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

2 Corinthians 5:17

There is no subject more important than the nature and extent of the inward change that takes place when a man is savingly joined to Christ.

"If any man be in Christ he is a new creation, old things are passed away and all things become new." Some think that this sanctification is God's work alone, that man has no part or concern in the matter, but is wholly passive. We wake up one day and find that we are saved; wake up the next day and discover that we have grown to spiritual maturity! Others think that this sanctification is man's work entirely — that God gives us the means of grace and waits to see what we will make of ourselves. Both are wrong! We are the elect of God, chosen, quickened and made alive by the will and power of God, redeemed by Christ alone and sanctified by His grace — but this change is effected through knowledge and belief of the truth. 2 Thess. 2:13: 1 Peter 2:1-2 tell us that the Word of God is not only the means of grace but also of growth. God enables us both to will and to do His good pleasure and by His grace we desire and perform that which is commanded. I may be a strong believer in election but if I do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ I will perish. I may believe in the security of the elect but if I do not continue in the faith I will hear Him say, *"Depart from me I never knew you."*

"Separated Unto The Gospel"

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."

Romans 1:1

I suppose the only preacher who ever really deserved a title refused to take one. He shunned the praise of men and the recognition of the flesh. It was not Rev. Paul, or Pr. Paul, or Bishop Paul, or even the Apostle Paul — just Paul! The greatest man born of woman, identified himself as only a voice in the wilderness, and the angel of Patmos rebuked John for paying homage to him, saying, *"worship God!"*

Paul considered being a bond-servant of Jesus Christ recognition enough and fit credentials to entitle him to be heard, but he added I am called to be an Apostle. I didn't take this responsibility upon myself — God put me in the ministry and entrusted His gospel to me.

I am separated unto the gospel of God! I will leave others to set in order the many ills of this world, the governments of nations and life-styles of

individuals and communities — my message is "*Christ and Him crucified.*" "*I am determined to know nothing among you except Christ and Him crucified.*" I must eat, drink and sleep like anyone else. I have expenses to meet like every man but the preacher who is separated unto the gospel will live by that gospel. When any opportunity, investment, or duty creeps in and takes time away from my preaching and study of that gospel, it must go. When any association, relationship or social contact tries to build a fellowship on any other ground than the gospel, they must go! When I am tempted to demonstrate my vast knowledge of history, psychology, prophecy, personal counseling, and politics I must say "get thee behind me, Satan, for I am separated unto the gospel. I know how you hate the gospel of redeeming grace and how you will corrupt even the preacher's mind from the simplicity of Christ. I will not be deceived by your praise! I will not be taken in by your offers of security in old age or your warnings of failure I am separated unto the gospel!"

IN MY FLESH DWELLETH NO GOOD THING

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not"

Romans 7:18

Not only Satan and false preachers, but our own flesh is an enemy of salvation by grace alone. Human nature always did kick against salvation by grace through faith and it always will. Even we ourselves, who know that Christ is our righteousness and sanctification, have to do battle with the urge to feel good, holy and wise; because of what we have done, given or learned. "Down, foolish thought, thou art the enemy of my soul." "*In my flesh dwelleth no good thing.*" My one hope is pure grace, sovereign grace, grace unqualified! God blesses me because He is good, not because I am good. God saves me because He is gracious, not because I am gracious. God accepts me because of what Christ has done, not because of what I have done. Any good or grace manifested in me is not me at all, but Christ Who dwelleth in me. I can take no credit for any

act of mercy or any pure thought. Left to myself I would be no better than the most evil creature.

The Lord Has Blessed

The Lord has blessed this congregation beyond expression. *"Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: They cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered."*

Psalm 40:5

Along with our ministry of the Word in this country, God has permitted us to have a part in the ministry of faithful missionaries in other countries. We are currently helping to support Brothers. Walter Groover, Alphonso Estrada and Milton Howard in Mexico, Bro. Chris Robinson in Ireland, Bro. David Ellis in France, Bro. David Estrada in Spain, and Bro. Bill Clark in Europe. I am pleased to report that our Deacons and Elders have added Bro. David Surpless, missionary for many years to Puerto Rico and Bro. Timothy James missionary and pastor to the Cherokee Indians, to our missionary budget. These men will receive a monthly gift along with any designated offering that may be given by you for their ministry. You will have the privilege of meeting them when they come our way next year.

I do not believe in church saving accounts or church bank accounts — if you wish to save or invest your money, feel free to do so, but every gift that is given to this church will be immediately put to use in preaching the gospel. As the Lord supplies the means, we will increase our efforts to make Christ known through the TV ministry, the printed page, and faithful missionaries. I have found that the more we give the more God enables us to give. I only pray for more open doors and wisdom to recognize the hand of God and the will of God. I must not cast our bread to the winds but the waters. "Lord show me the waters! And give me faith to cast the bread cheerfully and generously."

Seven Faithful Promises

“Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.”

Psalm 91:14-15

To the believer, who dwells in the secret place of the most High (within the Veil) and under the shadow of the Almighty, the Lord gives seven faithful words.

1). I will deliver him because he has set his love upon Me. I will deliver him from the penalty of sin, from the curse of the law and from all trials and troubles.

2). I will set him on high because he has known My name. Crucified with Christ, risen with Christ and seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

3). I will answer him when he calls upon Me. I have answered him in his call for mercy and will continue to answer him in all that he prays for My glory and according to My will.

4). I will be with him in trouble. In this world he shall have trouble but I have overcome the world and his troubles shall all be for his good and My glory. I will never leave nor forsake him.

5). I will honor him with a new name. He shall be no more Jacob (cheat-cunning) but Israel (Prince of God).

6). I will satisfy him with long life. Perhaps a long life on earth but the longest here is but a vapor — rather, with ETERNAL LIFE I will satisfy him. *"My sheep hear My voice and I give them eternal life!*

7). I will show him My salvation and My glory. My salvation is Christ whom Simeon saw and exclaimed *"Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."* And he shall be with Me, *"to behold My glory which Thou gavest Me before the world."*

"When by His grace I shall look on His face That will be glory — Be glory for me".

THE CHURCH

"I don't go to church because there are so many hypocrites in the church." "My life is as good as most church people!" These are common statements heard everyday to which I reply; don't judge the whole body by the faults of some. It is our responsibility to worship and follow the Lord Jesus, not men. If our brethren have faults, let us pray for them and patiently bear their infirmities as we ask them to overlook ours. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ welcomes all who are lame, halt, and blind. We look not for a perfect church this side of heaven. It is better to sit beside the hypocrite in church than to suffer with him eternally.

ADORN THE DOCTRINE

Paul exhorts us to "*adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*"

Titus 2:10

What is it to adorn the doctrine? We can't do it with great building and fancy architecture! God's grace and glory are not in luxurious temples but in living temples. We can't do it with our mode of speech! Saying thee and thine will not make thee His child or change thine heart. We can't do it with religious uniforms and dress. Hypocrisy is the same under a black hat or no hat.

We can adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour with genuine love; both for Christ and all men. There is no greater proof of discipleship than love. "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.*" There is no greater proof of an unregenerate heart than hate. "*He that loveth not knoweth not God.*" We can adorn the doctrine with kindness. "*Be ye kind one to another.*" "*If ye forgive not men their sins, neither will your Father in Heaven forgive your sins.*" We can adorn the doctrine with patience under trial. What better way can I preach my belief and confidence in God's sovereignty than by joyfully submitting to His hand whether it be in blessing or chastening? We can adorn the doctrine with happiness. When did piety become synonymous with sour expression and a grouchy disposition? Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord always. We can adorn the

doctrine with a generous spirit. *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."* Greed, selfishness and self-interest do not reveal grace!

Faith

"Now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee"

Psalm 39:7

Faith is the soil and waiting upon God is a flower that grows out of it. *"What wait I for?"* I have not found it, yet I am waiting for it. I have no earthly expectations. Hope of finding anything here that can satisfy me is forgotten. My hope is in Christ. To see Him; to be with Him; to be like Him! He will come for me some day; this is what I am waiting for, and nothing else!

Seeing Our Sin Compels Us To Flee To Christ

They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for Him.

Zechariah 12:10

There is no doubt that an awareness of our sins and iniquities compels us to flee to Christ for mercy and to believe on Him for forgiveness. It was the inability and need that drove the woman with the issue of blood to Christ; that brought the harlot to His feet and the leper to worship Him. But I believe that a true mourning for sin and lasting repentance comes from seeing Christ in His holiness, power, and sacrifice, *"They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for Him."* (Zech. 12:10).

Was this not the case with Isaiah, Job and even Saul of Tarsus? The more we see His holiness, the more we are made aware of our defilement; the more we behold His love, the more we are conscious of our lack of love; the more time we spend at His Cross of submission, the more we detect

our selfishness. It is difficult to say which comes first, repentance or faith.

But I'm sure of this, more genuine repentance is produced by faith than faith produced by repentance. Someone once said, "Christ is worthy of adoration and worship even from those who have never sinned (as the elect angels). When we praise and worship Him only because He saves us from sin, we do not properly understand His Lordship. David said, "*When I consider Thy heavens, the work of thy hand; what is man that Thou art mindful of him?*" (Psa. 8:3-4). This is the sight that really breaks the heart and humbles the proud spirit; to see our Sovereign Lord in His Redemptive Glory. No man can ever be the same after a Spirit-led trip to Calvary.

How Important is the Gospel?

There are some things that I might be wrong about and yet, I'll still go to heaven. It is possible to have an incorrect view of some doctrines but I must be right about the Gospel. For if I am wrong here, then I am lost for eternity.

What is the Gospel? As simply as I can put it is to say that it is the good news that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save ungodly sinners like you and me. God the Father had such love for us that He sent His own Son to live and die for Hell-deserving sinners. He lived to fulfill the Law of God, which I could never do. He died to secure my pardon. "*With His stripes we are healed.*"

This is good news to me! For if I see myself to be thoroughly sinful and I have come to Christ. I've committed my soul to Him for safe-keeping. He is my only hope of heaven and to Jesus alone I cling with the hands of faith. He is the way to the Father, to heaven and to eternal life. There is no other way. All other ways (baptism, works, church membership) are dead end streets and will end in Hell.

For it is written, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved*" (Acts 16:31).

Two Important Areas

The two most important areas in our religion are *faith* and *life*. Spurgeon said: "He who understands these two words is not far from being a master in true theology."

Faith and union with Christ; these are the two vital points to a Christian; they cannot be separated! You will never find true faith where you do not find true godliness and union with Christ and you will never find true godliness where there is no saving faith. True faith results in a living union with Christ and true godliness has for its root and foundation a sincere and continuing faith in the Person and work of Christ Jesus.

Christ Our Confidence and Assurance

We do not find rest, hope, or 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 or a source of help. Faith is a means, a look, an empty hand! Christ is our refuge who protects from every storm, our rock on which we build, our source of 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'm not debt-free because I believe (though I do and that faith united me to Him) but because He set me free and paid & debt! Christ is our confidence and 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

What is the faith of God's elect?

“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness”

Titus 1:1

1. It is looking to Christ! Isa. 45:22; Israel, in their helplessness, inability and dying condition looked to the brazen serpent. We look to Christ out of our bondage, sorrow and night. We look to Him for saving grace, living grace and dying grace.

2. It is trusting Christ - Isa. 26:34-35; Being fully persuaded like Abraham, that what He has promised He is able to perform, we trust Him and commit our souls to Him.

3. It is to receive Christ - John 1:12; It is to receive Christ as He is, not as I think He is, or as I want Him to be, or as someone says He is. But to receive Him as He is revealed in His Word.

It is to receive Him totally— not partially.

I hold out to you no “door-mat named Jesus” but a Sovereign, reigning Lord Who says *"Take My yoke upon you."* A commitment to Christ Jesus is a total commitment to Him as Prophet, Priest and King!

Grow In Grace

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,”

2 Peter 1:2

Peter prayed for believers a multiplication of grace and peace through the knowledge of Christ. The grace and peace of God is infinite in Christ and knows no degrees, but through the Word of God, as I grow in the knowledge of Christ, there will be new discoveries of the love and favor of God to my soul. There will be a growth in the internal graces of love, faith, humility and gentleness, and an increase in spiritual peace in believing, in trials and in perseverance.

The Exalted Lord

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Acts 2:36

1. Christ must be preached where He is now if we are to preach the gospel of His glory! Christ as prophet, teacher, healer and even as Savior men will preach about, and accept; but Christ as Sovereign Lord of lords and King of kings men will not tolerate. If Christ is exalted at the right hand of God everything else about Christ is easy to believe. His resurrection declared Him to be the Son of God — His exaltation declares Him to be LORD! Peter closed his message in Acts 2 with these words *"God had made this same Jesus, Whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Christ."* This is the climax of true gospel preaching. Jesus Christ is Lord! God hath delivered all things, all authority, all judgment and all revelation into His hands.

2. Christ must be preached where He is now if we are to correctly receive Him and call upon His name! Rom. 10:9 says *"If thou shall confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord...thou shalt be saved."* Rom. 10:13 says — *"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

One cannot confess, call upon, or receive a false conception of Jesus Christ and be saved. He is not a pitiful, helpless exile waiting to see what will happen. He is the enthroned Lord who has all power over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given Him.

3. Christ must be preached where. He is now if we who believe on Him are to have a good hope! I can have a good hope of salvation because my exalted Lord is able to save, to keep and to raise my vile body. I can have a good hope of success in preaching the gospel because my exalted Lord has all authority in heaven and earth. I can have a good hope of living in heaven because my exalted Lord has entered and taken possession of that heavenly kingdom, and wills for me to be with Him and behold His glory!

Giving Unto The Lord

"I will not offer unto the Lord my God that which costs me nothing!"

II Samuel 24:24

Why not have a rummage sale, candy sale, or a supper to raise money for the missionaries or the church? Why not a bond sale with high percentages returns? David gave us the answer when Araunah offered him the threshing floor, the oxen and the wood to sacrifice to the Lord — (II Sam. 24:24). *"I will not offer unto the Lord my God that which costs me nothing!"*

A gracious heart will not try to serve God with that which costs him nothing. If it is worth nothing to you it is worth less to God! Any gift, service, or effort for the glory of God that does not in some way involve the element of sacrifice or self-denial is of no spiritual value! Our examples in the scripture of true worship demand the first-fruits, the firstling of the flock and the choice lamb. God gave His Son — Abraham brought Isaac — the widow gave all she had! And we bring our used clothing, a collection of Coke bottles and our spare time! God doesn't want your spare anything!

1. A gift which costs me nothing reveals a lack of faith in God's power to provide!
2. A gift which costs me nothing reveals a lack of love for the object of that gift. True love considers no labor, cost or difficulty too great.
3. A gift which costs me nothing reveals a lack of regard for God's glory and majesty. The prophet in Malachi 1:8 says *"Bring your stale bread and your sick sheep to your governor and see if he will accept it."*
4. A gift which costs me nothing will never be accepted by the Living God Who said: *"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me!"*

"My life, my love I give to Thee

Thou Son of God Who died for me."

Light and Truth

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, (sound) thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil (unsound) thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness — How great is that darkness"

Matthew 6:22-23

My whole physical being responds and acts according to what I see with my natural eye. The information comes through the eye and is transported to every nerve, emotion and faculty, and I act accordingly! This is also true of my spiritual life. What I see or understand, from the Word of God, the Person and work of Christ, the preaching I hear, motivates my thinking, my attitude, my actions and my hope. If this eye of understanding is sound and truly taught of God, my whole being will be full of light and truth. My spiritual life will be lived for the glory of God. But if my eye of understanding is unsound and full of error my religious being will be full of darkness — and if what I call light is darkness HOW GREAT IS THAT DARKNESS! It is double-darkness!

That's the reason that a man with no religion at all is easier to preach the gospel of grace to than the religionist. The heathen is in darkness but the religionist is hedged about with a darkness that surrounds his natural darkness. He has built up a false righteousness and a false idea of God which has to be destroyed before one can attack his natural unbelief. He is dead but he thinks he lives. He is naked but he thinks he is fully protected. He is sick but he thinks he is well. The religionist sits in the darkness of his castle and refuge of lies surrounded by the walls of false peace, decisionism, religious works and tradition. These, too, are works of darkness and iniquity. No light will dispel his darkness of nature until the light of grace reduces to rubbish his righteousness and false religion. He will cry *"I count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him."*

Love For Others

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Philippians 2:4

The failure of most preachers is traced not to the fact that they do not have a pastor's head, voice, and energy but they do not have a pastor's heart! The failure of most church members and professing Christians, to be a blessing to family, friends and outsiders, is not that you do not have the proper doctrine, the proper moral integrity and enthusiasm for truth; you don't have the proper attitude and love for others!

If you don't really love people (sinners and saints) they sense it, and they not only won't love you but they won't listen to you! If you are not really concerned about the everyday problems and burdens of others, they don't want to hear you talk about their spiritual problems! Most fundamental, separated, religionists I know are big head, big mouth and small heart! They want to talk about "the things of the Lord," but have little love and concern for the things of others. Don't blame all of your loneliness on the gospel; much of it is caused by your unlovely personality!

Faith Alone

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Romans 3:28

The greatest sinner, whatever his past sins or present infirmities, or future problems; any son of Adam, Jew or Gentile, black or white, old or young; can be freely and completely justified before the most high God — all his sins pardoned, blotted out and forgotten by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith in Christ that sinner has a perfect holiness before God.

To state this so positively upsets many well-meaning religious people. We are told by them that it is dangerous doctrine which may lead men to live in sin while professing to be saved by Christ. They add: "A man can be saved by faith in Christ; if he is genuinely convicted of sin, if he has mourned apart, if he has repented sufficiently, if he is scripturally baptized, if he abstains from worldliness, if he holds the correct doctrine, if he does not succumb to any great sin!"

Brethren, I don't know who appointed us guardians of the promises of God or watchdogs of His grace, but the scriptures plainly says, "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life.*" I plan to leave it right there, adding nothing and taking nothing away. Jesus Christ is the all-sufficient Saviour and he that believeth on Him is not condemned. I also add that this matter of justification by faith is the article by which a church; a minister and a professor of Christianity stands or falls. There is no bridge between merit and mercy. They are as far apart as the poles and never the twain shall meet.

Laying Aside All Malice

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings"

1 Peter 2:1

Usually when we think of malice we confine it to hatred or a deliberate desire to do harm to another as "with malice aforethought." But malice in a believer can take other directions. It might be a continual unfriendly feeling or attitude toward another person, or another race! It might be an unforgiving spirit that wishes no harm but holds a long-time grudge over past mistakes. It might be a secret desire to see another fail or to get what is coming to him. It might be an unwillingness to speak to another or to show common courtesy. It might be a spirit of pride which enjoys cutting another or humbling another to show our superior intelligence, courage or strength. It might be a gossips tongue which enjoys relating the weaknesses, infirmities and failures of others. Call this what you will — but it all boils down to malice and ill-will which is unbecoming to those who are the objects of mercy. How can I have anything but pity and compassion for a fellow-worm?

When I Am Weak, Then Am I Strong

I suppose that the most difficult thing any believer has to learn is that *"without Him we can do nothing."*

John 15:5

This is our creed but not our experience! We will never be effectually used for God's true glory until it becomes our experience. God will never use means that are proud enough to think themselves necessary or capable. He will throw away the vessel that begins to boast in itself or allows others to boast in it. Whatever is our strength in the flesh is sure to become our weakness in the spirit whether it be our intelligence, our morality, our length of service, our doctrine, our courage or whatever. Gideon feared the Midianites because of the small number of his soldiers, but the Lord said, *"Your soldiers are yet too many for me."* I wonder if we will ever become weak enough, empty enough, and ignorant enough for God to use us for His glory.

The logic of the Lord is strange to the natural mind. *"For when I am weak, then am I strong."* (II Cor. 12:10) *"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."* (II Cor. 12:9) The Lord must go back to the seashore and raise up some fishermen; we've all become masters and doctors, wise men in theology and great counselors. I disqualify myself for God's use when I become qualified. My fine talents and lofty credentials become hindrances rather than helps. I thought to prepare myself for great things only to learn that it was the rough voice in the wilderness He planned to use not the polished preacher; it was the weak, impulsive shepherd with the sling He planned to use not the mighty warrior with his armor of wit and arsenal of facts, doctrines, and learning. It may not be too late for some, but most are too proud to become expendable. If we don't pour contempt on ourselves — God will!

The Storm Is In The Father's Hand

Years ago a boy asked his father why he was not afraid during a terrible storm and tempest. The father drew his hunting knife from his belt, put

it to the boy's throat and said, "Are you afraid of this knife?" To which the boy replied, "No, sir!" Upon being asked why he was not afraid, the boy replied, "because it is in the hands of my father." "Well," said the father, "That storm is in the hands of my heavenly Father, therefore I am not afraid."

An Ideal Church

If your study of the New Testament Church makes you unhappy because you cannot find its counterpart in the world today, or at least in your neighborhood, let me remind you that there were no perfect or ideal churches in the New Testament, except, of course, "*That glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, washed in the blood of the Lamb.*"

The local assemblies which met in various cities and towns during New Testament days were not perfect by any means. Corinth was troubled with divisions which were the results of spiritual immaturity. Colosse was troubled with vain philosophy. Galatia was troubled with the error of salvation by works; other churches had left their first love.

In spite of all these failings, our Lord walked among the golden candlesticks and held the seven stars in His right hand! The Bible points out the defects of these churches not to excuse people from assembling with the church, but to correct error and to exhort believers to a more consistent walk in holiness. The church is the people — "What kind of church would His church be, if all the members were just like me?" We would do well to take these Epistles not only as a pattern for New Testament Churches but also as a pattern for New Testament Christians!

The Key

People are always looking for the key to things; the one thing that will open for them the mysteries of life, of death, or personalities, of philosophy.

I believe I can give you the key to the Scriptures:

- 1). God's reign over all things.

- 2). Man's ruin by the fall.
- 3). Christ's redemption in the Cross.
- 4). The Holy Spirit's regenerating work.

What Happened at Pentecost?

Acts 2:22-36

There was a revelation of the sovereign Christ! Any great revival among men will only come when God is pleased to reveal who Christ is, what Christ did, why Christ suffered and where He is now! Any saving work God is pleased to perform for the sons of Adam will be accompanied by a clear revelation of the reigning and sovereign Christ.

The disciples were at the feast but they did not talk about themselves, their office, their success or the number of their followers. They preached Christ, the man, approved of God, ordained by God, crucified by men raised by God and exalted at God's right hand as Lord and Christ.

The Holy Spirit was at the feast but did not speak of Himself, His office, His gifts or His power. He glorified Christ. He pricked the hearts of sinners convicting of sin and revealing the sovereign Saviour.

The people were at the feast but they were not entertained by noted celebrities, choirs, elaborate programs, and wooed to make decisions for God. They heard a word of condemnation; they had rejected and crucified God's Christ. They heard a word of conviction; this same Jesus was raised from the dead, for no power can hold Him. Not death, for He is life, not darkness, for He is light, not sin, for He is righteousness, not men, for He is God. They heard a word of promise; He is exalted and made both Lord and Christ, with the power to save and the power to damn (Acts 2:36).

It may be that God will visit our generation with revival but it will not come through the preaching of a defeated, weak, powerless door-mat and reformer. It will come when preachers again sound forth clearly the gospel of God's glory, power, and sovereignty. Christ is Lord, bow down sinner, to the claims of King Jesus.

"My God, my God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?"

Matthew 27:46

This was the center point of His sufferings. The most awful words ever to fall from the lips of man. It is said that Martin Luther sat down in his study to consider these words of our Lord. He sat for hours and stared at the scripture. He refused to eat, he would not be disturbed, repeating the words over and over again, finally, he arose, closed the Bible and shouted "God forsaking God! No man can understand that!" Perhaps not! And if we spend our time trying to determine *how* this can be rather than *why* it had to be, we will be as frustrated as he was. Christ is our substitute and He was forsaken of the Father because we deserved to be! He was found guilty and was executed under the wrath of God because we deserved to be. Christ is every believer in one Person. He actually bore our sins in His body on the tree. Another thought worth considering if He had not spoken these words we would never have known that He was forsaken of God or the extent of His soul agony.

The Resurrection Of Christ

"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

1 Corinthians 15:14

If we deny the reality of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, then the whole gospel is made void. He is truly the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners only if He came forth from the grave. However, if he did not arise then he was not who He claimed to be and His blood will not save us from our sins.

"Cast Out The Bondwoman And Her Son"

"Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

Galatians 4:30

Abraham had two sons. Ishmael was the son of the bondwoman, Hagar, who represents the covenant of law and works. Isaac was the son of promise born to Sarah, who represents the covenant of grace. Although Sarah was the original wife of Abraham (actually the first and only wife) Hagar brought forth the first son! Even so, the covenant of grace in Christ is eternal and before the covenant of works; but the first man Adam was a son of works and flesh. When the son of promise is brought forth the child of works must be cast out. They cannot share the inheritance. Hagar (the law) and Ishmael (my righteousness) must be cast out that Christ might have all the preeminence and our hope of redemption be in Him alone!

Can you imagine the turmoil and conflict in Abraham's home while both of these sons lived there? Ishmael hated Isaac as works hates grace. Ishmael mocked Isaac as my righteousness rises up in conflict with Christ's righteousness. This is the reason why some do not have rest, peace and joy in their household of faith — they are trying to raise these boys together. They try to hold to Christ's righteousness and at the same time feed and nourish Ishmael, the son of law and human merit. There will be no real peace until the bondwoman of law and the son of human merit is disowned, disinherited and put out. Works and grace cannot share the same heart. Ishmael must not be allowed to have even a foot of ground, he must be forever deserted.

That which is born of flesh is flesh and can never share the inheritance with the son of promise; therefore he must not be kept around to mock and rob the house of its happiness. There will be no real assurance, peace and comfort in the heart until the Ishmael of human merit, righteousness and self-glory is deserted and forgotten.

"In my hands no price I bring
Simply to the cross of Christ I cling."

A Letter to a Brother Pastor

Dear Brother:

In a way I am sorry that you are exposed so early in your ministry to the hatred of unregenerate church members for the sovereign grace of God. In another way, I rejoice that this anger and opposition has risen, for it clearly declares that you have invaded the territory of Satan and you have stirred up his wrath. It also reveals that God has a people in your area whom He will call out through the preaching of the true gospel.

When we destroy the false hopes of religious men; when we expose their false refuges and their foundations of sand; when we attempt to give God all the glory for saving sinners; unsaved religionists will rise up in arms and try to silence us or persuade us to lay down the sword of the Lord and let them sleep on in peace. But the servant of the Lord knows that His gospel is the savour of life to some and the savour of death to others and men cannot remain neutral to the gospel of God's glory.

A group of religious people have no right to call themselves a church if they do not bow to Christ the head of the church, faithfully receive the whole counsel of God and submit to the overseer of the church, God's faithful preacher. The issue is not Calvinism, and never has it been the issue. The conflict is over "Who is God?" "How does God save sinners?" And "Is salvation by grace alone or by grace and works?"

Stay where you are and preach the gospel of God's free grace. Study and spend much time in prayer. Ask God to give you a message every time you stand to preach that will glorify Christ, convict men of sin and bring sinners to the feet of King Jesus. Adopt a spirit of love toward all men, even your enemies; remember that except for the grace of God we, too, would cry "Crucify Him" instead of "Crown Him."

Too long church members have called preachers to run their pagan programs, and preach to them what they want to hear. Is there not a prophet who will call Herod "a fox," the Pharisees "whited sepulchers,"—and call on men to bow to the claims of Christ? I believe you are one and by God's grace I intend to be a prophet of God. If I don't have the courage to tell men the truth about God, about themselves and about salvation; I will turn in my papers and go fishing! God's preachers please no one but God! It is tough to stand alone, to be hated by people you're trying to help, to preach a message despised and

discarded; but every man God has ever used was hated while he lived and praised after he is dead!

We might try to disguise the message and slip up on their blind side but we are fooling no one, not even ourselves. When the enemies of grace find out what you are saying, you'll discover that they don't have a blind side; they hate the God of the Bible on every side. Preach the Word as it is to men as they are, and depend on the Holy Spirit to call out God's elect.

I pray for you,
Henry Mahan

The Sure And Only Foundation Of Faith

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Romans 10:17

Christ Jesus is the object of faith and the Word of God is the only sure foundation of faith. How do I know that God will be merciful to sinners through the merits of His dear Son? He tells me so in His Word! Take away the infallible scriptures and you have no reason or right to believe in God's mercy.

Believer's Baptism

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Mark 16:15-16

For whatever reason men deny, discount, or make light of the immersion of believers as the public profession of salvation, I challenge them to do so using the Scriptures rather than their denominational fathers and their own human logic. The Scriptures require that every person who claims

Christ as Lord and Savior should be immersed. Mark 16:16; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Acts 9:18. Read the accounts of conversion in the New Testament and you'll find that all of them publicly professed their faith in Christ by following the Lord Jesus in baptism. You may sprinkle your infants and say that this ritual takes the place of circumcision. Paul was circumcised as an infant but when he became a believer in Christ he was baptized! Why be immersed when, like some of you, he had fulfilled the covenant ceremony? He was immersed to fulfill all righteousness, to be identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, and to publicly confess his faith in the Lord Jesus! And, I might add, to obey the command of his Lord!

We will never hear the gospel of God until we are blessed with some preachers who "care not!" Who care not what men say, who care not what men pay, who care not for tradition, who care not for position, but who only care for the glory of Christ.

Bought With A Price

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

1 Corinthians 6:20

Our people do not tithe — they give! I have found that there is something much better than law, duty and religious requirements; its love for Christ! I have found a much better motive for Christian giving than "Tithe and God will bless you;" it is give because God has blessed you! If the love of Christ does not constrain us, motivate us and encourage us to holiness, generosity and compassion toward one another, all of the pledge cards, threats, and rules set forth are just so much wasted effort. One-tenth of what I have does not belong to Christ — all that I have and am belongs to my Lord — for I am bought with the price of His blood. I am not my own.

True Love

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

1 Corinthians 13:13

If we love a person for his beauty, do we really love him? No; for disease or age will soon destroy beauty, and our love will cease. If we love a person for his good sense or pleasing personality, do we really love him? No; for he can lose all good qualities without ceasing to be and our love would cease. But if we love a person for Christ's sake, because Christ dwells *in* us and because Christ has taught us the meaning of real love — we will love him as long as Christ lives which is forever!

What is a Good Hope?

"God hath given us a good hope through grace"

2 Thessalonians 2:16

Being conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity, and brought forth from the womb speaking lies, it is the hope that I shall be born again by the Spirit of God and the Word of God and given the very life of God through faith. Being a sinner by choice and practice, having offended nod in thought, word, and deed, it is the hope that my sins shall be forgiven by the mercy of God and blotted out by the blood of Christ. Having no righteousness or merit of my own, for even my righteousnesses are filthy rags in His sight, it is the hope of being clothed in the beauty of holiness, and the righteousness of God accomplished by the obedience and merit of Christ. Being frail flesh and subject to temptations both within and without, from the flesh and the devil, it is the hope that by the grace of God I will continue in the faith of Christ, hold to my profession and persevere to the end; being able to declare with Paul, *"I have kept the faith."* Being a dying man, for I shall go the way of all who have lived before, and as it is appointed unto men once to die, I shall die. It is the hope that, in Christ, I shall have part in the first resurrection, and that this mortal shall put on immortality and this corruptible, incorruption having

a desire to be with Christ and be like Christ it is the hope that I shall live eternally in His presence and be perfectly conformed to His blessed image.

"These eyes shall see Him in that day,
The Lord that died for me;
And all my rising bones shall say
Lord, who is like to Thee?

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

The Whole Truth

"I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you."

Acts 20:27

The old truth that Paul preached, that every bold servant of God preached in days gone by, is the truth that I must preach today or else be false to my conscience and my Lord. I cannot shape and mold the truth or make it easier for rebels to digest. I dare not try to take the offense out of the cross or file down the rough edges to keep everybody happy. I am appalled when I hear or read sermons by preachers, who profess to believe the gospel of God's grace, and immediately recognize an effort on their part to camouflage or conceal the truth of God's sovereignty in salvation, His elective grace, the Holy Spirits effectual work or the special and particular redemption of Christ for every believer! This is not only dishonesty but utter folly; for no sinner is going to savingly come to Christ until he forsakes his ways and his thoughts! A man can only be set free by knowing the truth not part-truth or half-truth. Paul set the example for me when he declared *"I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you."*

You may spend your efforts appeasing, shunning to declare plainly certain truth, and keeping back what you judge will offend, divide or run off today's church-goers but to borrow the words of Luther, "Here I stand, I can do no other." If a certain truth is in the Word of God it will, by God's grace, be preached from this pulpit, whether men are ready to receive it, disposed to receive it, or apt to receive it. I expect God to bless this determination! He has and He will!

"When I stand before the throne
Dressed in beauty not my own,
When I see Thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with un-sinning heart,
then Lord, shall I fully know,
not till then how much I owe."

Salvation

Salvation is not to "try God" — it is to know God. Salvation is not moral reformation — but regeneration. Salvation is not to decide for Christ — it is to receive Christ. Your salvation only surprises you God purposed it.

Life In Christ

He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

1 John 5:12

I was greatly impressed, while reading Mr. Spurgeon this week, by a statement he made regarding those who spend most of their time trying to resolve the deep and mysterious theological questions. He said, "There is the puzzling problem concerning the origin of evil. I am not so much concerned about how evil came into the world as about helping to get it out! Common sense seems to say: if there is a thief in the house, let us catch him, deal with him and get him out — after that we will try to find

out how he got in! Our Lord did not come into the world to tell us where sin came from but by the sacrifice of Himself to put it away."

It has for centuries been a great temptation to many talented men to spend their time studying, arguing and quarreling over sovereignty and responsibility, Sabbath days and church government, prophetic speculation and future events, when they would have been better employed and more greatly used of God in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. It certainly does not harm us to sharpen our minds, to look into the mysteries of God, to inquire into that which is written, revealed and unrevealed — but our powers are limited, our gifts are limited and our time is limited. Let us sound a clear, positive note concerning that which God has made known without doubt, "*He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*" A man can be saved and not know whether he is pre, post or a-mil but a man cannot be saved who does not know Christ. A man can be saved without a love for T.U.L.I.P. but he cannot be saved without a love for Christ. A man can be saved who refuses the lordship of elders but a man cannot be saved who refuses the Lordship of Christ. A man can be saved who does not enter the rest of your Sabbath but a man cannot be saved who has not ceased from his labors and entered the rest of Christ.

Sanctified

"For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

Hebrews 10:4

"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth."

John 17:17

These seeming contradictions vanish when one understands that the first verse refers to the believer's standing in Christ before God! We are perfect because we are in Christ. The second verse refers to our life on earth in thought, walk, talk, and growth. We are sanctified in the one case and being sanctified in the other.

"Be Not Weary in Well-doing"

Galatians 6:9; II Thess. 3:13

If you ask me what I fear most for myself and for you — the answer may surprise many of you. I fear and tremble when I see spiritual indifference and weariness with the things of Christ and when I detect a lukewarmness toward the gospel. The Word of God and spiritual literature goes unread. Worship services, Bible classes and fellowship with believers are neglected. Interest in others hearing the gospel and coming to Christ begins to wane. More attention is given to houses and lands, farms and jobs, entertainment and fleshly pursuits than to matters that concern the soul. Our knowledge of Christ becomes a thing settled instead of a relationship sought. The Christian race becomes the Christian rest. The spirit of humility, "*Less than the least*" gives way to pride, self-interest and hurt feelings. That sweetheart love for Christ and the things that relate to Him begins to decline, and our comfort is no longer a person but a profession.

Brethren, if we grow weary in what little spiritual atmosphere we have here, we could never find happiness in the altogether holiness of heaven. If we tire of Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us, when we hear it only three or four hours a week, how could we endure an endless song by every voice in heaven and earth singing His praises? If we had rather be in the company of the world than in that blessed company of the redeemed — then this will most likely be lost forever! Men do die as they live!