

Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan For the Year 1980

Hearts Are Naturally Hard

Men's hearts are spiritually hard. The world can win a man's heart; gold can win a man's heart; fame and popularity can win a man's heart; but there is not a minister living who can win a man's heart to God. We can reach the eye, the ear, and the head, but not the heart. But He can:

"Speak with that voice that wakes the dead
And bid the sinner rise;
And make the guilty conscience dread
The death that never dies."¹

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father

"Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also."

I John 2:23

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. There cannot be a Father without a Son nor a Son without a father. He that honors not the Son as the Son honors not the Father.

He is the very Christ and true Messiah spoken of by the prophets, typified in the sacrifices, and looked for by Old Testament saints. He is that Prophet, our great High Priest, and our sovereign King.

Anyone who denies Christ's true deity and true humanity, regardless of what other office, position, or praise he may give to Christ is an antichrist! To make Christ any less than He is, is to rob Him of His glory.

¹Spurgeon, Charles H. *The Power of the Holy Ghost*. Sermon no. 30. Vol. 1. New Park Street Pulpit. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1855.

If Jesus of Nazareth is not "*the Word made flesh*" [God in human flesh], then He is an imposter and all who worship Him are idolaters! But, if He is "*very God of very God*", then all who reject Him in that character are condemned.

But Something was Wrong!

ROLFE BARNARD told about a young preacher who graduated from a Bible institute and began to preach the easy-believism gospel which he had he learned in school. His Bible teachers had the dispensations all arranged, prophecy all figured out, methods perfected to attract the biggest crowds, soul-winning procedures down pat, and "how to build a great church" neatly wrapped in a fool-proof package.

This young preacher made sure to use every gimmick, every tactic, and every invitation in his effort "to win men to Christ" and he was very successful! The people heard his easy-believism message and they accepted Jesus as their saviour from hell, as the supplier of their financial needs, and as the healer of their bodies. And, for good measure, they were told that they were eternally secure in their decision and could never be lost.

BUT SOMETHING WAS WRONG! The young man detected no fruit of the Spirit in his great congregation. He saw no love for Christ, the Word, or even for other people. There was no faithfulness in worship, giving, and witnessing unless were motivated by threats, special programs, pledges, and contests. There was no hunger and thirst for righteousness, no meekness and humility; there was only divisions and strife!

In desperation, he resigned from this religious monstrosity and began all over again. But this time, instead of preaching easy-believism, he preached man's ruin and God's remedy in Christ. He declared salvation to be the gift and work of Christ. He demanded that men repent and receive Christ, not only as Saviour, but as the Sovereign Lord of their entire lives. And he called for unconditional surrender, total submission, and heart faith in Jesus Christ.

This way was difficult, as Christ said it would be. The message was offensive, as Christ said it would be. But the result was the miraculous

calling out of bond-slaves and disciples to Christ and the young preacher's heart rejoiced in the presence and fellowship of his Lord.

Paul's Farewell to His Friends at Ephesus

Acts 20:18-35

Knowing they would see his face no more nor hear his voice proclaim the gospel of the Savior's grace again, he summed up his ministry among them as such:

1.) (Vs. 18-19) *"I have served the Lord with humility."*

There is no other way to serve Him who fills empty vessels and chooses the foolish to confound the wise. We are conscious of our own imperfections, aware our gifts are borrowed, and totally dependent on His power.

2.) (Vs. 20-21) *"I have kept back nothing profitable unto you."*

I have declared two essential things; *"Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."*

3.) (Vs. 27) *"I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."*

Neither fear of men, nor desire for praise or position, nor covetousness have ever led me to leave out portions of Scripture which are offensive to natural men.

4.) (Vs. 32) *"Now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace."*

It is God who saved you, not me! Your faith stands not in the wisdom of men but in the Lord Jesus Christ. Be not followers of men but of Christ. *"Desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby"* (1 Pet. 2:2).

5.) (Vs. 33) *"I have coveted no man's silver, gold, or apparel."*

"Those who preach the gospel are to live by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). They must not be influenced nor motivated by fleshly cares or carnal prizes. Your gifts and provisions are appreciated but not sought.

6.) (Vs. 35) *"I have showed you how that you ought to support the weak."*

Pray for one another, encourage the weary, feed the hungry, restore the fallen, cheer the faint, visit the sick. *“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*

A Hiding Place from the Wind and a Shelter in the Storm

“Thanks be unto God Who causeth us to always triumph in Christ, our Lord”

2 Corinthians 3:14

I creep under my Lord's wings in the great storms of life and the waters cannot reach me. Let fools laugh the laughter of fools. Let them mock me. Let them bid the weeping one to sing them one of the songs of Zion. We can sing; we can sing in the winter storm; we can sing in the day of falling leaves; we can sing in the summer's scorching sun.

We can sing for our victory is won; our victory is Christ. No created power on earth or in hell can mar our Lord's work so no invisible force can spoil our song. No trial within or trial without can destroy our union with Him.

“For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39).

Though our hearts be keenly aware of our sins; though our minds endure a conflict over natural evil; though our eyes be filled with tears of repentance; though dangers are within and without; *“Thanks be unto God Who causeth us to always triumph in Christ, our Lord” (2 Cor. 3:14).*

“Content with beholding His face,
My all to His pleasure resigned;
No changes of season or place,
Would make any change in my mind:
While blest with a sense of His love,

A palace a toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove.
If Jesus would dwell with me there."²

A Faithful Saying

"This is a faithful [true] saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief"

1 Timothy 1:15

There is a lifetime of preaching in this verse but there are two points of great importance which are sometimes overlooked; the truth of the saying and the worth of it! To discover the truth of the gospel is to find true peace of mind and to discover the worth of the gospel is to find true peace of heart.

1.) The truth of it. *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"* (1 Jn. 5:11). I believe the record that God hath given concerning Christ; therefore, I am not troubled and confused by other voices or other claims. Let God be true and every man a liar. The apostle summed it up this way; *"To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life"* (Jn. 6:68). My mind is satisfied!

2.) The worth of it. If I have Christ, I need nothing else, either in this life or in the life to come. I am complete in Him, redeemed in Him, accepted in Him, and already seated with Him in glory. I have ceased from all my labors and efforts to secure divine favor. His redemptive work is not only effectual but is sufficient for the greatest sinner, the poorest sinner, and the weakest sinner. *"My grace is sufficient for thee"* (2 Cor. 12:9). Does this not leave your heart in a state of rest and peace? If not, then you have not yet discovered the worth of His great atonement.

²Newton, John. How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours. *Olney Hymns*. London: W. Oliver, 1779.

A General Principle

It is a general principle that a blessing is about to come from God when we are moved to seek Him with all our hearts. Men do not, by nature, long for nor seek God. So if one is aware of his great need and impressed to seek mercy in Christ, he can be sure the blessing is already designed.

By Grace Alone

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast”

Ephesians 2:8-9

“By grace ye are saved.” There is no present salvation except that which begins and ends with grace! No man can preach or possess a present salvation except those who preach and believe that we are saved by grace alone! The work is finished! Any other way of salvation is dependent on the sinner and it will fail.

The Dog Follows His Master

So long as two men are walking together, you cannot tell which one of them the dog belongs to. But let the two men part company and it then becomes evident; the dog will follow his master! The dog does not hesitate, debate, or remain undecided; he quickly follows the one he loves.

Where Christ and men separate; where the Word of God and the traditions of men divide; where the ways of God and ways of the flesh part, the servant of Christ does not hesitate, debate, or remain undecided; he follows Christ, whom he loves, regardless of the cost.

The master may go to a simple cottage, a meal of dry bread, and a lonesome existence while his companion enjoys all the luxuries of the world. But the faithful dog cares little for these things so long as he is with his master.

"Content with beholding His face,
My all to His pleasure resigned;
No changes of season or place,
Would make any change in my mind;
While blest with a sense of His love,
A palace a toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove.
If Jesus would dwell with me there."³

The Law Fulfilled in Love

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"

Galatians 5:14

The Scriptures overwhelm us with this word love:

"By this shall all men know the ye are my disciples, if you love one another"
(Jn. 13:35).

"He that loveth not knoweth not God;" (1 Jn. 4:8).

"...but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13).

"If I have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2).

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12)

If this miracle of grace; this fruit of the Spirit; this nature of regeneration is a reality to me - an experience of my heart - then Christ becomes my beloved Lord; duties become pleasures; ordinances become desires; enemies become friends; and suppression of self for the good of all and the glory of God becomes a joy!

³Newton, John. How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours. *Olney Hymns*. London: W. Oliver, 1779.

If the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by His Holy Spirit, then I am able to accept trials and afflictions from the hand of my heavenly Father with grace and submission; able to live in peace with all men; able to forgive misunderstandings; able to overlook the infirmities of others; and able to build a happy relationship with the family of God.

Love begets trust, confidence, and hope. But where love is absent Satan is able to get the advantage and sow his seed of division, doubt, fear, jealousy, envy, and strife. Nothing renders a man more unlike Christ and more like Satan than to despise love and show instead a spirit of wrath and hatred.

Love is the sweetest bud that blows,
Its beauty never dies;
On earth among the saints it grows,
And ripens in the skies.⁴

Of all the joys we mortals know,
Jesus, Thy love exceeds the rest;
Love, the best blessing here below,
And nearest image of the blest.⁵

Four Important Facts

1.) There can be no saving benefit by Christ without union with Christ:
“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,”
(Gal. 4:19).

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:” (Col. 1:27).

2.) There can be no union with Christ except by faith. It is by His Spirit that He takes hold of us and it is by faith that we lay hold of Him. He is in us by His Spirit; we are in Him by faith.

⁴Swain, Joseph. Love is the Sweetest Bud That Blows. *Walworth Hymns*. London, 1792.

⁵Watts, Isaac. Of All the Joys That Mortals Know. *Plain Psalmody*. London, 1800

3.) There can be no saving faith accomplished apart from the preaching of the gospel:

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:13-15).

4.) All the preaching in the world cannot reveal sin, reveal Christ, or bring the sinner to repentance and faith, unless accompanied by the effectual work of the Holy Spirit:

“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall be all taught of God.’ Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:44-45).

Three Things Self-righteousness Can Never Do

There are three things that self-righteousness can never do:

- 1.) It can never honor the divine law
- 2.) It can never satisfy divine justice
- 3.) It can never quiet a guilty conscience

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness

My beauty are, my glorious dress:

’Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,

With joy shall I lift up my head.

When from the dust of death I rise

To claim my mansion in the skies,

Even then, this shall be all my plea,

Jesus hath lived, hath died for me.⁶

When Water is Best

It is in the desert where water tastes the sweetest; when the lips are parched, the mouth dry, and the throat like cotton. It is then that every drop is precious and none is wasted. When it seems life hangs on no more than a drop it's then that a man will part with his fortune for some water to quench his thirst.

And, likewise, it is in the grip of trial where the Water of life tastes best. When the soul is dry from many a windy day. When the muscle of the human spirit is strained past another try and despair threatens to snuff away the last ray of hope. Oh, how precious then are the words of the Saviour!

It is then that no excuse is given for absence when He speaks; the weary mind will give its last thought just to hear one more sweet syllable from the Saviour's lips. Not a single word falls unheeded into space.

The thirsty soul will leave every other pursuit just to lay hold upon but a sip of this life-giving Water. Would it not do us all well to know a little more of that desert where men count precious the words of Christ?

Give Up and Gain!

Oh! soul, weary of thy many troubles, give up and give thyself into thy Saviour's hand. He waits thy resisting strength to die.

There His strong arm lies beneath thee. There He will bear thee up. There, resting only upon His might and riding only upon His merits, will you soar to heights only dreamed of but the best not yet known.

So give up and gain! When thou art faint, He shall lift thee up!

⁶Von Zinzendorf, Nikolaus L. Jesu, Thy Blood and Righteousness. *Christi Blut und Gerechtigkeit*, 1739. Trans. John Wesley. *Hymns and Sacred Poems*. London, 1742

The Woman's Place

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

I Timothy 2:11-15

Paul clearly teaches that women are not to lead in prayer, to teach, or to assume authority over the men in the public worship and services of the church but they are to learn in silence (I Cor. 14:34-35). It is equally clear that women are to pray, teach their children, and instruct other women in the gospel of Christ in their homes.

The apostle gives two reasons why women are to be subject to men.

1.) *"Adam was first created, then Eve."*

Man's headship is established in creation (I Cor. 11:3; I Cor. 11:8-9). The woman, by divine rule, is in subjection to her husband and any attempt by her to assume the part of head, leader, or instructor is to overturn God's order.

2. *"Adam was not deceived; but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression."*

Adam was not deceived, what he did in the garden was to please his wife. Eve confesses that the serpent beguiled her; thereby, suggesting her inferiority to the man in strength, spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. She was already under her husband's rule before the fall but her subjection to the man is more greatly imposed as a punishment for her part in the transgression (Gen. 3:16).

God's blessings are upon women in their true sphere; that of motherhood, home-life, and godliness. But none can expect His mercies while living in rebellion against His revealed Word. God did not create two chiefs of equal power and authority but He gave to man a precious companion to be loved, led, and protected by her head as he follows the example of his Head, who loved His bride and gave Himself for her (Eph. 5:23-25).

"Oh Jesus Christ, most holy!

Head of the church, Thy bride!
Oh may in each believer,
Thy love be magnified."⁷

Holding Faith and a Good Conscience

"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck"

1 Timothy 1:18-19

Paul exhorts Timothy to "*war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience.*" I understand the word *faith* here to be a general term meaning sound doctrine and the word *conscience* to deal with honesty and integrity. The chief things demanded of those who would preach, teach, or minister the gospel of Christ are these two:

- 1.) That he should hold firmly and boldly to the pure truth of the gospel of God's grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, our Lord. We shall not - we must not - compromise the gospel of His glory. If righteousness comes by works, laws, or merit, then Christ died in vain. All of grace; all in Christ, is our message.
- 2.) That he shall minister this gospel with a good conscience, serving the Lord God with a sincere and perfect heart. We preach not ourselves but Christ; we seek not yours but you; we covet no man's possessions, praise, or approval. "*I know how to be abased and how to abound*" (Phil. 4:12). Where these are found, all of the others will follow in due time.

⁷ Von Zinzendorf, Nicolaus L. "O Jesus Christ, Most Holy." *Our Own Hymn Book*. Charles Spurgeon. Pasadena: Pilgrim Publications, 1975.

The Importance of This Fellowship to Me

1.) I am a believer, a son of God in Christ Jesus. God has been pleased to reveal His Son in me. He is my life, my hope, and my refuge. I live by His grace and grow on His Word. And so I must constantly be where I can hear His Word in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in assurance. I must be fed on the truth!

2.) I love Christ, He is precious to me, and so all that is of Christ (His church, His ordinances, and His people) is precious to me. I not only feel that I must be identified with them in this world but it's also my greatest enjoyment to fellowship with believers around the person of Christ. I am just not happy or content around those who do not know or rejoice in Him. Where the people of Christ go, I will go; where they lodge, I will lodge; where they die, I will die, and there I will be buried. I will not be interested by whatever temptation there may arise to leave them.

3.) I am a frail human. I am subject to fall and subject to attacks from the world, the flesh, and the devil. I am not perfect and I have not arrived. I fear indifference, sin, and coldness of heart. Therefore, I need to be exhorted daily, I need to be encouraged, I need to be comforted, and I need to be rebuked. The world and its liberal preacher who cries "peace, peace" and the religionist will not do these things for me; only the true pastor and the true believer (who know my nature and need) can be all these things to me.

4.) I am a witness. Christ said, "*Ye shall be my witnesses.*" I am concerned for the salvation of my family, friends, and people around the world; therefore, I desire to bring my family and friends under the word of truth and help to send pastors, evangelists, preachers, and missionaries to other towns and countries to preach Christ.

My Father, I thank Thee for this fellowship of believers.

I pray you will make them a blessing to me

And will make me a blessing to them!

Believers Represent the Lord

Several years ago I applied for a home improvement loan at a local bank. I did not deal with the president of the bank or an officer of the bank but with one of the employees. This particular employee was quite rude and unkind to me causing me to cancel my account at that bank and move to another. The only contact I had with the bank was with this very poor representative but it was enough to discourage me from going there again.

You and I represent our Lord, the gospel of the Lord Jesus, and the church of the first-born. The only contact some people have with the church and kingdom of God is through us. What kind of impression do we leave on them? What idea of Christianity do we convey to them?

I wonder if they do not sometimes walk away offended, disappointed, and resolved not to inquire any further into our faith or listen to our message. I realize that we are frail creatures, subject to all of the limitations of the flesh, but we need to set a watch on our lips, control our tempers, and put forth a special effort to adorn the gospel of His grace. If we endure persecution for the gospel's sake, well and good, but not if we bring it on ourselves by our own faults!

Repent and Be Baptized

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"

Acts 2:38

C. H. Spurgeon once closed a sermon with these words; "I call upon every man here to do what Christ bids him. I call upon you, first of all, to prove that you believe in Christ by being baptized. 'He that believeth in Christ and is baptized shall be saved.' The first proof that you believe in Christ is to be given by yielding to the much despised ordinance of believers' baptism, and then, having done that, going on to the other means of which I have spoken. Oh! I charge you by your soul's salvation neglect nothing Christ commands, however trivial it may seem to your

reason. Whatever he saith unto you, do it, for only by a child-like obedience to every bidding of Christ can you expect to have the promise fulfilled, "They that trust in him shall be saved."⁸

Would not this be a fitting close for every message directed to the unsaved? Instead, we call on men to pray the sinner's prayer, to come forward, to pray through at an altar, and neglect the very command of Christ which says, "*believe and be baptized*"; the words of Peter in Acts 2:38 to "*repent and be baptized*"; or the words of Ananias in Acts 22:16 to "*arise and be baptized*."

While I know that baptism has been misused, misplaced, and misapplied, it is still the Scriptural way to confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Unto Thy death baptized,
We own with Thee we died;
With Thee, our Life, we’re risen,
And shall be glorified.”⁹

“Baptized in the Savior's name,
We'll walk as sons of God:
Baptized in Thee, with joy we claim,
The merits of Thy blood.”¹⁰

Wait Upon the Lord

Even though trouble is laid upon you, it is not as heavy as it could be nor as severe as they would be if the Lord was pleased to deal with you in justice rather than mercy. Therefore, "*Wait upon the Lord for they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint*" (Isa. 40:31).

⁸Spurgeon, Charles H. Fruitless Faith. London. *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. Vol. 60. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1914. Print. Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

⁹Deck, James George. "Around Thy Grave, Lord Jesus." *Our Own Hymn-Book*. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1883. N. pag. Print. Compiled by Charles Spurgeon

¹⁰Bowly, Mary. *Our Own Hymn-Book*. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1883. Print. Compiled by Charles Spurgeon

Faithfulness to The Lord

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2).

A local church is a company of brothers and sisters. We are one family; one life is ours; one love is ours; and one objective (to know and glorify the Lord Jesus) is ours. This is the comfort and strength of all: that we are all one in Christ. We cannot properly minister the gospel of Christ without one another. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you."

Spurgeon once said, "I don't know which renders the greater service - the man who preaches or the man who prays, but I know this, we can do better without the voice than without the heart of prayer!"

Blessed and happy is that assembly of redeemed people, brought together and baptized into one body by His Spirit, whose love for the Lord Jesus and for one another enables them to sing with one voice, pray with one heart, walk in one direction, and worship with one Spirit! Where each member realizes the importance of his presence, his prayers, his support, and his co-operation. Where Christ is Lord and all others are servants! Where the will of Christ is preeminent and all other wills and desires are in subjection! Where there are no young and old, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, but only Christ, who is all and in all.

"Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (I Cor. 4:2). It is easier to be faithful in that which is seen than in that which is unseen; that which is at the front rather than at the rear. But neither is more or less important than the other. It is that service which seems most commonplace among men which is often the most precious to our Lord. If I can do what I do for the glory of God, then it will bless both me and His church.

Love and Trust: The Ties That Bind

"And above all things, put on love, which binds everything together in ideal harmony"

Colossians 3:14

The relationship which exists between true believers in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and between that of the pastor and the people within the family of God is one that cannot be understood by the natural man or by the unsaved religionist. The carnal church must have strings attached to the pastor to regulate his comings and goings: he is assigned a vacation time, so many outside meetings, pulpit and visitation duties, set times for business meetings, certain quorums at which he must be present, things which must be voted on and dutifully announced a set number of days in advance...even members are not allowed the freedom to designate gifts! By-laws, constitutions, and rules of order are printed and distributed so that the pastor dare not act without the approval of the deacons and the deacons dare not act without the approval of the congregation and the congregation dare not act without the due process and vote of the monthly business meeting.

All of this has come about because these people do not love and do not trust one another! The pastor who loves Christ, the church, and lost souls will not need rules and regulations of men to motivate him or keep him in line. Deacons who love Christ and one another do not need to be assigned duties, serve limited terms, and be consulted on every matter. Church members who love Christ and one another and trust their God-given leaders do not require a written report of every move made, every cent spent, and every work undertaken. Their relationship is one of fervent love and complete trust. Each member is allowed to exercise his own gift, act as a free steward of his own grace, and engage in the ministry God has given him without interference and forced control by others. Yet all together fulfill the will of God and none are complete without the others. Regenerated men understand this and you waste your time trying to explain it to the rest.

I Am the Chief of Sinners

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief”

1 Timothy 1:15

When the prodigal came home, he did not hang up his old rags as trophies, as some do when they give their testimonies, bragging about how sinful they used to be. I'm sure the old rags of his former shame were burned and forgotten and his attention given to the beautiful robe furnished by his father.

I am sorry to say that some insist on making a glory out of their shame and like to talk of their past sinful ways, usually without a blush on their cheeks or a tear in their eyes. As Spurgeon once said: "In some circles he is treated as a hero who can prove that he has been the greatest rascal."¹¹

Our former sins are things to be confessed to God in secret, not displayed in public as an old soldier shows his medals. We do not glorify God in this regard, but only serve to feed the lust of the fleshly-minded.

"*I am the chief of sinners*" is sufficient public acknowledgement of our past and present sins for, even then, how little do we know just how true that is!

Biblical Evangelism

“For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living”

Romans 14:9

Is the whole concept of present-day evangelism wrong? I believe that it is! Present-day evangelism is based on the fact that death is near for all and, after death, there is a hell to shun and a heaven to gain. If we don't want to go to hell, we must find a way to make peace with God, thereby gaining an entrance into this wonderful paradise called Heaven. The way

¹¹Spurgeon, Charles H. Sermon No. 2127 Love's Competition. *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. Vol. 36. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1890. Print.

to attain this coveted prize in some circles is to come to the front of the place of worship and say that you believe in God and accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. In some circles, you must come to an altar and look for an experience or an emotional upheaval. In some circles, the way is to join the group and pay your expected dues. And in other circles you reform your life and live by certain principles. But the ultimate goal of them all is the same; to stay out of hell and to go to heaven.

But true biblical evangelism says that God has turned this world over to the Lord Jesus Christ, who purchased the crown rights at Calvary. "*He died that He might be Lord of the dead and the living*" (Rom. 14:9). "*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*" (Ph. 2:9). True biblical evangelism commands men to bow to the claims of Jesus Christ and to receive Him as Lord and believe that God hath raised Him from the dead and exalted Him.

Whatever He is pleased to do with me, He is my Lord. If I have an interest in His atonement, His grace, and His mercy, I shall be a trophy of His eternal grace; if not, I shall honor His justice; but, either way, He is still the Lord! Oh! that I may win Christ and be found in Him.

Six Arguments for Holiness of Life

1 John 2:29-3:6

The following verses all have a two-fold theme; believers will live godly in this present world and they will love one another. Faith is always connected with obedience and love.

1.) I John 2:29 - If we know that Christ our Lord is righteous then we know that those who are begotten of Him will be righteous. To be born of God is to have the nature of God, the grace of God, and the presence of Christ formed in us, causing us to be like Him.

2.) I John 3:1 - The amazing, eternal, infinite love which God has bestowed on us, making us sons of God, is a privilege that exceeds all others. How can we then serve self and sin in the face of such love and grace?

3.) I John 3:3 - We are going to be like Christ and every person who now has this hope in Christ of being like Christ will make every effort to be

like Christ NOW. It is foolish for a man to say, "I want to be like Christ someday...but not now."

4.) I John 3:4 - Every person who practices sin as a course of life, excuses and justifies a life of flesh, and lives unrestrained, is lawless and a transgressor of the law. But no true believer can ever find peace outside of the fellowship of God. If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie.

5.) I John 3:5 - Christ was sent to take away sin and, in Christ, the believer has no sin. But the main thought of this verse is that Christ did not come to put away the penalty of sin only but also the power of sin over His sheep. Sin shall not reign over you. We are, therefore, servants of Christ and not servants of Satan or sin.

6.) I John 3:6 - Those who know Christ and abide in Him hate sin in themselves and they hate sin about them. They do not deliberately practice a life of sin because, to continue in sin, is to give clear evidence that one has not truly seen His glory or ever known Him for "*if any man be in Christ he is a new creature*" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Growing in Grace

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen"

2 Peter 3:18

Someone said:

"The Lord believed is joy begun;
the Lord adored is joy growing;
the Lord beloved is joy matured."¹²

¹²This is a variation on a phrase originally rendered, "A deity believed is joy begun; a deity adored is joy advanced; a deity beloved is joy matured," by Joseph Kinghorn of Norwich, quoting a Dr. Young, in his *Memoir*, published 1855, and later quoted by Charles Spurgeon in his sermon no. 778 *Plain Words with the Careless*, delivered October 13th, 1867.

Kinghorn, Joseph. *Joseph Kinghorn of Norwich: A Memoir*. San Bernadino: Ulan, Reprinted 2012. Print.

Spurgeon, Charles H. *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. Sermon No. 778 *Plain Words with the Careless*. Vol. 13. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1867. Print.

I know that every sinner saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus remains always in the school of faith and is never fully satisfied with his efforts in prayer to, or worship of, the Lord of Glory. But, oh! to be enabled to pray and worship by the Spirit of God and to love Christ with a singleness of heart so that Christ only is my life, my light, and my love!

Then I would not fear death, for death would only usher me into His presence. I would not know darkness, for even the darkness would be light about me. I would not experience despair or disappointment, for His loving presence and tender care would be sufficient.

To love Him as He loves me would make everyday a cheerful walk with Him and every night a sweet rest in His arms. To believe is to live; to worship is to grow; to love is to enter into His rest and peace.

The Problem and The Solution

We won't make much headway in finding a solution if we don't understand the problem. A cure is not likely to be found if we have no knowledge of the disease. In the matter of salvation, the problem is man's sin; the solution is God's grace. The disease is moral depravity and spiritual inability; the remedy is God's mercy in Christ.

If a man is near-sighted, he only needs corrective glasses, but if he is blind, he needs the miracle of sight! If a man is sick, he only needs medicinal aid, but if he is dead, he needs the miracle of life! If man has only strayed from the way, he needs directions, but if he is completely lost, he needs to be found!

So here is the question that must be settled by preachers and people alike: "What happened in the garden?" When one feels obliged to come to some conclusions on the subjects of election, irresistible grace, and particular redemption it would be wise for him to first determine the condition of the sinner who is to be saved.

If man was only wounded by the fall he needs only assistance; if he is dead in sins, he needs to be resurrected and that by the purpose and power of the God of life. If fallen man still has his moral ability and power of choice, then let us wait for him to choose and seek God, but if fallen man loves darkness and will not come to Christ, then Christ must love and come to him.

Children of Love

“Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end” (John 13:1).

God showed His power in making us creatures, but He showed His love in making us sons. A man may give thanks that God had made him a man rather than a beast, but how much more we ought to praise His glorious name for making us children of love rather than leaving us in our state of sin. When I think of what and where I could be, my heart overflows with gratitude to my Redeemer!

Read This Carefully!

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”

1 John 4:1

The churches and religious organizations in our land are quite impressive. They occupy a very influential position in our society. No official or public person will dare to speak disrespectfully or criticize any form of religion today. True believers can often be heard to say, "Well, they do say some good things and who am I to judge?" And even the agnostic will speak softly of today's religion, lest the wrath of God come upon them.

Where would we be today if Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and the Reformers had adopted this position? Our Lord said, "*Ye have made my house a den of thieves*". He said called out false preachers as wolves in sheep's clothing who, like their father Satan, have transformed themselves into ministers of righteousness.

Let us not be deceived by the subtlety of Satan or by the so-called zeal and sincerity of today's religious hucksters; "*if they speak not according to the law and the prophets it is because there is no light in them.*" To expose a religious thief is no more than to expose any other common thief. To expose a religious quack is no more than to expose a medical quack.

Don't be awed by the fact that they claim the power of God to be on their side. Examine all that you hear by the Word of God and don't be afraid to "*try the spirits whether they be of God*".

Challenge my message or any man's message in the Spirit of God and by the Word of God! You never have to worry about incurring the wrath of God when you are sincerely seeking Him and His glory!

We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake"

2 Corinthians 4:5

The apostle describes in this verse the ministry of every true preacher; we preach Christ, not ourselves! We point you to Christ and not to us, our wisdom, or our organization. With that in mind, when can it be said of us that we are preaching ourselves and not Christ?

- 1.) When we preach what we think instead of preaching what God says.
- 2.) When we preach what men want to hear instead of what men ought to hear.
- 3.) When we seek to please men by taking the offense out of the cross and glory in the flesh.
- 4.) When we set ourselves up as spiritual authorities over the consciences of our hearers, judging their salvation by their relationship with us and our requirements.
- 5.) When we try to impress men with our wisdom, knowledge, or piety.
- 6.) When we become ambitious for personal recognition and begin to boast of numbers and converts and attach our names to buildings, organizations, monuments, and movements.
- 7.) When we fear public opinion and court the friendship and approval of carnal men at the expense of truth.

- 8.) When we allow our hearers to entertain any hope of salvation except by the sovereign grace of God through the merits of Jesus Christ.
- 9.) When we preach for any other reason than the glory of Jesus Christ and the eternal good of our hearers.

All Flesh Is Grass

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"

Isaiah 40:3-9

The two-fold message of evangelism is "*All flesh is grass!*" and "*Behold your God!*" This is the message which strips man of all his glory, as Job was when he said, "*He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head*" (Job 19:9).

It is also the message which gives all the glory for all things to the One to whom all glory belongs; our Lord Jesus Christ! The results of preaching man's inability and God's sovereignty will be a sense of the awful presence of God breaking the proud hearts of guilty men and women and bringing them to the feet of Christ for mercy.

Gone will be the voice of the proud sinner who stands in the church and debates whether or not he will patronize the Lord of Glory; whether or not he will accept Jesus; whether or not he will let God have His way; instead, we will hear men and women cry:

“Depths of mercy! Can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear,
Me, the chief of sinner’s spare?”¹³

Grace Alone

“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins”

Acts 10:43

I can understand how men and women, who have never read or heard the Word of God preached, can look to and depend on their works and self-righteousness to make them acceptable before God; for such things seem logical to the natural mind which knows nothing of God, sin, righteousness, and divine holiness. But I cannot understand how any person who has read the Scriptures can fail to see that salvation is by grace alone through the merits and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God Forbid

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”

Galatians 6:14

Every religious person is going to glory in something. He will glory in his pedigree, his morality, his gifts, his office, his revelations, or his sufferings. But with a strong, "GOD FORBID," Paul made a clean sweep of all these grounds for boasting declaring, "I will glory only in the cross of Christ."

You know, without me having to tell you, that he wasn't referring to a tree, a necklace, or a symbol on a church steeple, but to the great

¹³Wesley, Charles. *Depths of Mercy. Hymns and Sacred Poems.* London: 1742.

atonement of our Lord. He was referring to the substitutionary, vicarious suffering of Christ, as revealed in the glorious gospel, which came from the cross.

How I wish that today's religion would totally abandon the superstitious use of crosses and begin to once again preach the true cross of Christ, which is the gospel of His glory!

That Which God Burns into the Heart

The best commentator on the Word of God is its Author and the best way to learn the meaning of scripture is to go to that Author in prayer. Often I am staggered by scripture and I will make use of the commentaries and books by various authors but, at the same time, I also pray, "Lord, open this scripture to me for your glory and for my good."

Whatever men teach you, men can *unteach* you! But that which God burns into my heart is mine forever!

Love

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”

1 Corinthians 13:1-8

Love is:

Slow to suspect; quick to trust
Slow to condemn; quick to justify
Slow to expose; quick to shield
Slow to demand; quick to give
Slow to resent; quick to forgive
Slow to belittle; quick to appreciate

When Is A Man Truly Saved

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace”

Galatians 1:15

Someone asked, "When is a man truly saved?" Well, my friend, to be saved is more than just believing in one God; the demons believe even

that! It is more than just trembling under the preaching of the Word; Felix did that! It is more than holding an office in the church; Judas did that! It is more than submitting to the ordinance of baptism; Simon Magus did that! It is more than weeping over sin; Esau did that! It is more than just respecting the preacher; Herod did that! It is more than keeping company with outstanding believers; Demas did that!

To be saved is to know God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. It is to be a new creature in Christ Jesus, regenerated and converted by the power of God. It is to believe on Christ with the heart and confess Christ with the mouth. It is a miracle of deliverance accomplished through the preaching of the gospel and the work of God's Spirit.

So when will a man be saved?

- 1.) He will be saved when it pleases the Lord (Gal. 1:15).
- 2.) He will be saved when he bows to, and comes under the authority of, the Lord Jesus! (Rom. 10:9-10.)
- 3.) He will be saved when he sees the redemptive glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. (II Cor. 4:5-6).
- 4.) He will be saved when he can see the guilt of his sins before God and the sufficiency there is in Christ's life and death to provide him a perfect righteousness and a just atonement (II Cor. 5:21).

I Like What you are Saying

"I like what you are saying," was the reply of a friend at the door Sunday night. I had expressed my joy over his presence with us and his reply of *I like what you are saying* could not have pleased me more.

It was not *I like you* or *I like the music* or *I like the atmosphere* or *I feel it's my duty to attend* but I LIKE THE GOSPEL YOU PREACH.

The gospel that is good news to the needy and glad tidings to the troubled will find itself welcome with the Lord's sheep. You pray for me and come to the services and I will seek the Lord's message for us! If it is God's truth and you are God's children, then you too will *like what I am saying*.

If you know these things, happy are ye if you do them

“So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

John 13:12-17

Our Lord had just washed the disciple's feet. He had taught them the truth of full cleansing and daily cleansing when He said, *"he that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all"* (Judas was not clean).

By washing their feet, He had symbolically taught them that they were to lay aside contentions regarding personal greatness, distinctions, and preeminence. Each one was to become a servant of all, willing to take the lowest place, with no one striving for recognition or praise. *"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet."*

"If you know these things" [if you understand and have learned anything of what the Lord has revealed here] then happy shall you be if you do these things. Exemplify in your life and conduct the things you have learned.

Two-fold happiness - true and complete happiness - stands forth here: happy is the man to whom God will not charge sin and happy is the man whose heart is knit together in true love with the Lord's family. His sins are pardoned and he is free from fleshly ambitions and covetousness. He has nothing to fear and nothing to prove!

He rests in the Lord's pardon and enjoys the Lord's peace in all that he does or is called to do. He can both ride forth to battle or stay home to water the horses with the same dedication. He can preach and he can pray for those who preach. He can teach and he can listen to others

teach. He can preside over the table and he can serve the food. He can rejoice with those who rejoice and he can weep with those who weep. He does all things alike with the same devotion and enthusiasm, for he is the Lord's bond-slave.

I Know Whom I Have Believed

“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day”

2 Timothy 1:12

A number of well-meaning people (I suppose they mean well) have put a lot of emphasis on *when* a person is saved. They insist that one should be able to pinpoint the time and place when they were delivered from darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Some may be able, like the apostle Paul, to recall a Damascus road experience. Others, like the apostle Peter, may recall a more drawn out process; the initial meeting and first confessions, but then struggles to learn, impulsive claims, even doubts and denials. But all these things led up to a love feast at the sea of Tiberias where he exclaimed, "*Lord, you know that I love you.*"

But whether the conversion is short and memorable or long and eventful, the goal of faith and seeking should always and only be "*to win Christ and be found in Him; to know Him and the power of His resurrection.*"

The time, the place, or even the experience itself, all fade into the background in the presence of OUR BLESSED LORD! I'm more interested in WHOM you know more than *when* you met Him!

Blessed is the man whose delight is in the Word of God

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

Psalm 1:1-2

He delights to read the Word, to hear the Word preached, and to meditate upon the Word day and night. The Word of God is bread for the believer, giving strength to his faith and hope! Meditation is his very character, for he knows that *"as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he!"*

After hearing an old saint quote the 23rd Psalm, a famous orator was asked to explain the difference in style. He replied, "I know the Psalm; he knows the SHEPHERD."¹⁴

Faith Comes by Hearing

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"

Romans 10:17

The preaching of the gospel of Christ is the soul-saving ordinance. It is not through the eye but rather through the ear that salvation comes to men. *"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God"*.

In every age God has raised up men to faithfully proclaim His gospel of grace. Elijah may ascend but his mantle fell to Elisha. Paul may die but not until Timothy is trained and on the field.

The true preacher of God's gospel has a rightful claim on your attention. If God has sent him, men should - and must - hear him for he who preaches Christ crucified has life flowing from his lips. And he who hears will find life flowing in his heart and soul. *"God hath chosen by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"* (1 Cor. 1:21).

¹⁴Brown, Hugh B. *The Quest*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1961, pp. 335-36

Love to God and Others

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

1 John 4:20

John is saying here that all who truly love the living God also love those who are in the image of God and that which is identified with God here and now on the earth. How foolish it would then be to claim to love God while holding in contempt those things which are God's - the very people He has made for Himself and by whom He is pleased to reveal and glorify Himself.

You have never seen God and this leaves you free to imagine whatever you will about God. This allows you to form and make a character which pleases you and then call it "god". *"Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself,"* said the Lord in Psalm 50:21.

But the living God is revealed in His own dear Son who walked on this earth. He is revealed in His Word, His providence, His creation, and yes, in His church! The people of God (frail and weak though they may be) are a part of God Himself.

He loves them, redeems them, indwells them, and uses them to accomplish His purpose and glory. So to not love them and to refuse to be identified with them in their fellowship and worship is to declare loud and clear that we really do not know and love God. *"He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit."* (1 Thess. 4:8).

Therefore, the religious recluse who can find no one who agrees with him, no one who pleases him, no one and nothing to enjoy, and no fellowship in which to delight, is not really in love with God at all - he's just in love with himself. He is settled in self-righteousness and in under a false concept of God. That which he sees and hates is that which God made. That church which he shuns is God's church. That providence in which he finds no delight is God's providence by which God works His divine will.

Christ said, *"In as much as ye did it not unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto Me"* (Mt. 25:45). Christ and His church are one! John is

simply telling us, in no uncertain terms, that it is impossible to love one and not to love the other.