

# Bulletin Articles of Henry Mahan For the Year 1983

## Our Authority

Our authority is THE WORD OF GOD! We are God's ministers; we preach God's truth; we declare God's gospel of free grace as revealed in the Word of God; and we have no time to debate and dispute with the worms of the dust concerning their thoughts and feelings about redemption and eternal life!

Our Lord declared, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mt. 28:18-20)

If men hear you, they hear Him who sent you. But if they despise you, it's not you they despise but Christ and His word. If they reject you, shake the dust off your feet as a witness against them and go somewhere else and preach the gospel. Christ did not dispute with men; He preached to them.

## The Power to Pardon and a Nature to Forgive

Many years ago, having offended the king, a noble was brought before James II of England. "You know it is in my power," said the king, "to pardon you."

The man, knowing the cruel character of James, replied, "It is in your power but it is not in your nature."

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

# See Him

*“He that seeth the Son and believeth on Him hath eternal life”.*

John 6:40

Put the emphasis where it belongs – “He that seeth the Son.” Look to Christ, lay hold upon Christ, learn of Christ; in Him and through Him you will be led into all truth.

We do not arrive at Christ by getting our doctrines straight but, rather, we come to a right understanding of doctrine and theology by seeing Christ. Someone asked Mr. Spurgeon, “What body of divinity do you recommend?” He replied, “I have never heard of but one body that divinity ever had and that was the body of our Lord Jesus and the study of that body of divinity will make you systematic theologians of the best kind.”

If you understand anything of astronomy, you must begin at the center, which is the sun. And if you put anything at the center of your system of teaching and doctrine except the Lord Jesus Christ, you will only fall into error and confusion, as if you tried to study the stars without having the sun at the center.

A true sight of Christ reveals all that is IN CHRIST and, according to the Word, God was in Christ reconciling the world. *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”* He that has seen Christ has seen the Father, seen the Spirit, and will, in God’s own time, see all the rest.

Another important thing: a true revelation of Christ will take care of some unpleasant things that we see. I see sin in myself but I also SEE HIM as my righteousness and sin offering! I see trial and sorrows everyday but I also SEE HIM caring for me and in His good providence working them all together for my good! I see death and judgement approaching but I also SEE HIM, my Justifier, my resurrection, and my life! I see friends and neighbors in darkness, ignorance, and unbelief, but I also SEE HIM who is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him! I see Satan and the forces of evil seeking the destruction of Christ’s church but I also SEE HIM who is the conqueror of the prince of this world and remember His promise, *“The gates of hell shall not prevail.”*

My friends, if you can see Him, you will find that one sight will make amends for the dark things you see!

# Born of God

*“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and everyone that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him”.*

1 John 5:1

All who are born of God believe that Jesus is THE CHRIST. The title of Christ signifies *anointed* and includes all the offices of the Son of God. To believe Him to be the Christ is to believe Him to be the THAT PROPHET Moses said should come, the one who would declare the whole mind of the Father. It is to believe Him to be THAT PRIEST who should come after the order of Melchizedec and make atonement for our sins and intercede for the transgressors. It is to believe Him to be THAT KING whom God hath set over all things.

This believing is more than a mere assent to the fact or acknowledgment of it; devils have done as much (Lk. 4:41). Rather, it is to believe with the heart (Rom. 10:9-10) and to look to Him, receive Him, and trust Him as our righteousness; to lay hold of Him as our fountain of life; and to continue through all of life to find in Him all we need.

Such faith is far beyond the reach of the human mind; it is the gift of God. Those who believe are *born of God*. This faith is the result of regeneration, not the product of natural wisdom.

Those who are born of God will also love all who are born of God! The phrase *Him that is begotten of Him* is not just a reference to Christ alone but also of all who are born of the Spirit. And if we love Christ, we also love ALL who are born of God. It is quite impossible to love Christ and not love His body (1 Jn. 4:19-21).

## Malice

*“Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious”*

1 Peter 2:1-3

Peter exhorts us to lay aside all MALICE. 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 may not wish actual harm but still holds a long-time grudge over past mistakes.

It might be a SECRET DESIRE to see another fail or to get what’s 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 GOSSIP’S 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 themselves the objects of mercy. How can I have anything but pity and compassion for a fellow-worm?

## The True Social Gospel

C.H. Spurgeon had a profound sympathy with the poor and the unfortunate, but it is doubtful whether it ever occurred to him that a fundamental change in the social structure was needed. For Spurgeon that would have been *putting the cart before the horse*. A changed social structure does not necessarily mean a changed society; but CHANGED

HEARTS and CHANGED INDIVIDUALS within society MUST of necessity bring about a change in families, homes, and businesses.

Spurgeon felt called of God to first preach Christ to sinner and to lead his church in an evangelistic effort to reach sinners with the gospel. What we call SOCIAL SERVICE was for him merely the outworking and expression of genuine Christian character as a result of knowing the Redeemer. If men and women know and love Christ, they will strive to live for His glory, walk in His commandments, and help those who are in need.

I feel very strongly about MANY of the issues raised by the fundamentalist preachers. We are opposed to wholesale abortion, drugs, drunkenness, pornography, and many TV programs; but is it the ministry of God's preachers and churches to *reform* Rome or to preach the glorious gospel of Christ?

If Rome did reform, would they be any nearer the kingdom of God or merely whited sepulchers? Reformation is not salvation, but true salvation brings about a change in conduct and behavior. There are temptations to *have a say* in politics, in school affairs, and in social issues; but let us dedicate ourselves once again to the motto of the Apostle Paul; "*I am DETERMINED to know nothing among you save Christ and Him crucified*" (1 Cor. 2:2).

## The Life of Faith

True faith is built upon the strongest evidence possible – the WORD OF GOD! True faith is a total dependence upon THE LORD JESUS CHRIST for all our needs; such as forgiveness, sanctification, peace, and eternal life.

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

## To Have the Life of God

Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the way BECAUSE His is the truth and the life. He said *“I am the truth”* and *“I am the life”*.

This means if we have Christ, we have the true life of God. It also means that if we do not have Christ, we do not have real life.

Our natural life is but a continual dying. As the Son of God, Christ has the fullness of life in Himself; as Redeemer and Mediator, He is the fountain of life for all who come to Him by faith.

## Sin Not

*“My little children, these things I write unto you, that you sin not.”*

1 John 2:1

John does not hold out the possibility that any person can be totally free from sin. This would be contrary to the Scriptures and to his own words found in the first chapter.

He is saying that the believer will not live in sin, indulge the flesh, walk in disobedience, or behave like the world. The true grace of God in a man’s heart does not excuse or condone sin, but rather condemns it and gives him a continuous desire to please Christ and to be like Christ in both attitude and conduct.

True believers mourn their sins, confess them, and seek to avoid them. Under no circumstances does a believer justify sin because it was atoned for by Christ. But we do give thanks that have an advocate with the Father, a great High Priest who pleads His righteousness and sacrifice (and I add for your comfort) MOST EFFECTUALLY!

## Coming to God by Christ

Every man by nature is attempting to climb up to heaven on the broken ladder of works or trying to cross over the flood of God’s wrath on the

fallen bridge of the law. As sure as God is holy, all these attempts will fail; for *“by the works of the law, no flesh shall be justified in His sight.”*

God has established a bridge between heaven and earth by the OBEEDIENCE, DEATH, and INTERCESSION of His eternal Son and every other way to heaven but this is blocked by the justice and holiness of God.

*“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me”* (Jn. 14:6).

## Giving unto the Lord

Why not have a rummage sale, candy sale, or a supper to raise money for the missionaries or for the church? Why not a bond sale with high percentage returns? David gave us the answer when Araunah offered him the threshing-floor, the oxen, and the wood to sacrifice to the Lord. *“I will not offer unto the Lord my God THAT WHICH COSTS ME NOTHING”* (2 Sam. 24:24).

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 would bring used clothing, a collection of Coke bottles, and out 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 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.”<sup>1</sup>

## A Good Employee

*“Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters and to please them well in all things, not grumbling, not stealing, but showing good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things”* (Titus 2:9-10).

- 1.) Be submissive and obedient to your employer, whether he is a believer or an unbeliever. You are hired to do a job; do it with all your heart as unto the Lord.
- 2.) Seek to please your employer and give satisfaction in every way. Pride of workmanship and production is not to be condemned. Laziness and indifference is a disgrace to the gospel.
- 3.) Don’t talk back or contradict your employer. Do not reply to orders given in a cutting, saucy, or grumbling manner. Someone said, “The boss may not always be right, but he is always the boss.”
- 4.) Do not steal from your firm in time, money, or things you consider of small value. Do not convert to your own use, without permission, that which belongs to the company.
- 5.) Prove yourself to be a loyal, reliable, and faithful employee. It is not loyalty to criticize and find fault with your employer behind his back. Keep trusts and confidences which are committed to you.

In fulfilling the part of a GOOD SERVANT and a loyal employee you are able to adorn the gospel you believe, making it attractive to others.

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<sup>1</sup>Hudson, Ralph E. *I’ll Live for Him*. Various. 1882

## Perfect in Christ

There is nothing that will make a person look to Christ alone, cling to Christ alone, rest in Christ alone, and love Christ alone than to realize that everything God is, everything God requires, and everything the sinner needs is in Christ alone. We are perfect in Him!

He is perfect and our being *in Him* makes us perfect in God's sight.

Near, so near to God,  
nearer I cannot be;  
For in the person of His Son,  
I am as near as He!"<sup>2</sup>

## No Bridge between Merit and Mercy

The Scriptures plainly say, "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life*" (Jn. 3:36). I plan to leave it right there; adding nothing and taking nothing away.

Jesus Christ is the all-sufficient Saviour and he that believes on Him is not condemned. I also add that this matter of justification by faith is the article by which a church, a minister, 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.

## Faith Must Be Tried

Faith must be tried. It can only be proved by trial. Faith is too often counterfeited and so trials are sent by our heavenly Father that we may determine whether we truly believe Him or whether we are leaning on the flesh.

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<sup>2</sup>Bonar, Horatius. *A Mind at Perfect Peace with God*. Hymns of Faith and Hope. London: Castell Brothers, 1857.

If I would know the genuineness of my faith – that I am not a stony-ground hearer; that I have not run in vain – my faith and profession must be tested in the furnace of affliction and the fire of trial.

## Habit or a New Heart?

Religion can change the HABITS; it takes the grace of God to create a NEW HEART!

## A Meek and Quiet Spirit

We do not persuade men to repentance, faith, and righteousness, nor promote the glory of God WITH AN ANGRY SPIRIT. *“For the wrath of man WORKETH NOT the righteousness of God.”* A meek and quiet spirit is of great price in the sight of God!

## Abraham Believed God

To believe God is no little thing! It is the evidence of a heart reconciled to God; it is proof of our being weaned from our works and deeds; it is a clear sign of true conviction of sin; it is honoring to Christ, our only Redeemer; it is the essence of true worship; and it is the root of sincere obedience!

The person who believes God in spite of his sin and infirmities, who believes God in spite of fleshly wisdom and opposition, who believes God come what may, gives the Lord God more honor and glory than the cherubim and seraphim in their continual adoration. DO YOU THINK FAITH A LITTLE THING?

How is it then that our Lord said, *“He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life”*? How is it that a whole nation perished in the wilderness because of UNBELIEF? How is it that we are said to be *justified by faith* and *he that believeth not shall be damned*?

Faith is the parent grace. Whatever you put in second place, faith must have the first consideration; for it is no small thing – IT IS YOUR LIFE! “*If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.*”

“*Lord, I BELIEVE, help Thou my unbelief!*”

John Flavel said, “The soul is the life of the body. Faith is the life of the soul. Christ is the life of faith.”<sup>3</sup>

Inscribed upon the portal from afar,  
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,  
Legible only by the light they give,  
Stand the soul-quickenings words:  
BELIEVE AND LIVE.<sup>4</sup>

## 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, my hope is that I shall be born again by the Spirit of God and the Word of God and given the very life of God through faith.

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

Having no righteousness nor merit of my own (for even my righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight), my hope is 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, my hope is that by the grace of God I will

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<sup>3</sup>Flavel, John. *The Method of Grace*. 1681. W. Barnes and Son (1820); reprinted by Banner of Truth Trust, 1968.

<sup>4</sup>Spurgeon, Charles. *My Sermon Notes from Ecclesiastes to Malachi*. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1885. Poem attributed to William Cowper.

continue in the faith of Christ, hold to my profession, and persevere to the end, 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; *as it is appointed unto men once to die*, I shall die), my hope is that, in Christ, I shall have part in the first resurrection and that this mortal shall put on immortality and this corruptible, incorruption.

Having a desire to be with Christ and to be like Christ, my hope is 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?”<sup>5</sup>

“There shall I bathe my weary soul  
In seas of heavenly rest,  
And not a wave of trouble roll  
Across my peaceful breast.”<sup>6</sup>

## Our Authority is the Word of God

Our authority is THE WORD OF GOD! We are God’s ministers; we preach God’s truth; we declare God’s gospel of free grace as revealed in the Word of God; and we have no time to debate and dispute with the worms of the dust concerning their thoughts and feelings about redemption and eternal life!

Our Lord declared, “*All authority is given unto me in heaven and earth, go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel.*” If men hear you, they hear Me; if they despise you, they despise Me; so shake the dust off your feet as a witness against them; go somewhere else and preach the gospel.

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<sup>5</sup>Toplady, Augustus. *Tis Sweet to Rest in Lively Hope*. 1777.

<sup>6</sup>Watts, Isaac. *When I can Read my Title Clear*. Hymns and Spiritual Songs. 1707.

Christ did not dispute with men; He preached to them.

## Looking unto Him

I'm sure that some who lived in the days of our Lord's visitation to earth, and many who heard the gospel from the apostles and the faithful preachers who followed them, could tell you the exact day when they met the risen Redeemer and bowed to His sovereign rule. I have never felt that it was important for a person to be able to tell WHEN he was saved, but rather the he be able NOW to state that he has experienced repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; that NOW he is looking to Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King; that NOW he is resting in His righteousness and effectual sin-offering.

Too often men and women like to establish a time of conversion and some sort of experience, in order to have something to look back upon for comfort and assurance. But this is dangerous! We are not to look to anything nor anything but Christ for our hope, our assurance, and our comfort. Paul said something about "*forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before*" and "*looking unto the Lord Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.*"

Most of us came through the confusion, errors, and false professions of modern fundamentalism, and had so much to unlearn and so many false foundations which had to be destroyed, that it is difficult to set an exact hour when our eyes were turned totally from our idols of religion to our living Lord – when our hearts were weaned from the pride of our religious works and professions and brought to REST IN HIM ALONE! This is the unaided work of the Spirit of God and the Word of God. And this is the living union which shall never be dissolved.

## A Time of Refreshing

I'm encouraged to believe that our Lord is honoring the gospel which is preached here and in other places. In the past in the past two months we have seen some conviction of sin and some sincere interest in the good

news of redemption. The baptismal waters are being disturbed and people are publicly confessing their faith in the Lord Jesus.

We are determined to preach the Word of truth about God's character, man's lost condition, and Christ's sufficiency and willingness to save, regardless of the results; but how blessed it is when our gospel becomes *"the savor of life unto life."*

My word to all who know and love Christ is:

Pray much for yourselves, for those who preach, and for those who come under the sound of the gospel.

Invite and bring your friends and relatives to these services and *"wherever prayer and preaching is wont to be made."*

Give out tapes and literature to all who will listen and read.

It may be that we are entering a time of refreshing of revival. I am receiving more and more invitations to preach the Word all over the country, more than I can possibly fill. Other brethren are experiencing the same thing. We have come through a certain dry spell and it would be such a blessing to see our Lord manifest His grace among us.

Let us, therefore, dedicate ourselves to the task at hand. And, as Bro. Richardson said, "We only have a few more years at most, let us be determined to give it our best shot."

## **His Will be Done**

A believer was quite ill and, upon being asked by a friend if he thought he would recover from the illness, he replied, "It really does not matter. If I die, I shall be with the Lord. And if I live, He will be with me. So, whether I live or die, I am the Lord's. His will be done."

## A Gracious Arrangement

Christ, as King, has received from the Father universal authority over all flesh to the end that He may confer eternal life upon His elect. To save a people for His glory, the Father has taken the whole world of men and angels from under the immediate rule of God as Absolute God and placed them under the authority, power, and government of Christ the Mediator.

Because of this gracious arrangement A FALLEN RACE IS PERMITTED TO EXIST. A sinful world encountering an absolute God must be instantly doomed to hell. But men, as rebels, live on in virtue of the Mediator. When His people are called and His family complete, then the world will be destroyed.

And it is because of this gracious arrangement THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED to all nations and a sincere invitation is extended to all who will come.

## Faith

The medium by which the gospel becomes the power of God is FAITH. Faith is a reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ for all the blessings, benefits, ends, and purposes for which the gospel reveals Him; such as pardon of sin, peace of conscience, strength for obedience, and eternal life.

Faith is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit through His Word and presupposes a knowledge of Christ and of ourselves; of our emptiness and His fullness; of our unworthiness and His merits; of our weakness and His power.

The true believer believes, receives, and builds upon the person and word of Christ as the only foundation of his hope; he enters by Him as the only door to the knowledge, communion, and love of God; he feeds upon Him as the only bread of life; he embraces only Him as his redemption, wisdom, and sanctification; he derives all his strength and comfort from only Him.

## By the Grace of God, I am What I am

While we rejoice in God's mercy which has saved us, in the blood of Christ which cleanseth us, and in the faith with which He has blessed us, let us always remember that we cannot stand a moment longer than God upholds us. We are like a walking cane in a man's hand; take away the hand and the cane will fall to the ground. We are like a small infant held up by a mother's arms; if we are left on our own, we shall immediately fall.

The flesh says, "I shall fail"; the world says, "I will deceive you"; the devil says, "I will sweep him away"; but God says, "I will keep him; I will NEVER FORSAKE HIM."

We desire inward holiness, we long to glorify Christ in our conduct and conversation, we strive to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; but, always before us is the truth BY THE GRACE OF GOD, I am what I am!

## Religion Versus Truth

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

## The Obedience of Christ

By an active and passive obedience before the Law of God, Christ has made sure for every believer all the promises of God. They are ours *in* Him, *by* Him, *through* Him, and *for* His glory.

# Trials

*“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you” (1 Peter 4:12).*

*“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into different trials; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patientce” (James 1:2-3).*

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

- 1.) Real trial touches us PERSONALLY – our flesh, our hearts, our homes, our children! This is not something we read about concerning others and offer high-blown advice, but something we EXPERIENCE.
- 2.) Real trial goes to THE ROOT OF THE MATTER and reveals the truth of our nature. It shows whether repentance, faith, love for Christ, and confidence in His purpose and providence are realities or pretense. Trials do not produce faith; trials reveal the faith that is there or they reveal the sham and hypocrisy that is there.
- 3.) Real trial tests A MAN’S GRACES. We talk of love for one another, but not until real trial comes can we be sure that we do love. We talk of forgiveness and mercy, but not until forgiveness is needed and mercy is required can we be sure that we have it to give! Some of the best religious *talkers* are the poorest *doers* when comes to putting their theology into practice.
- 4.) Real trial gives us AN OPPORTUNITY TO MINISTER TO OTHERS: first, by equipping us with necessary abilities. None can enter into a brother’s sorrow like one has actually been in the same situation. Second, by bringing us to the brother’s side at this particular time. “I’m sorry that you are burdened in such a way, but I rejoice that the Lord affords me the OPPORTUNITY AND PRIVILEGE of helping you bear your burden.”

My brethren, don’t fumble the opportunity to relieve the distressed, forgive the fallen, or feed the hungry. You just may not pass this way again.

*Read immediately Matthew 25:41-46.*

## John Gill's Last Words to a Nephew

“I depend wholly and alone upon the free, sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love of God; the firm and everlasting covenant of grace; and my interest in the persons of the Trinity for my whole salvation; and not upon any righteousness of my own, nor on anything in me, or done by me under the influence of the Holy Spirit; nor upon any service of mine, which I have been assisted to perform for the good of the church do I depend; but upon my interest in the persons of the Trinity, the free grace of God, and the blessings of grace streaming to me through the blood and righteousness of Christ, as the ground of my hope.

These are no new things to me, but what I have been long acquainted with and what I can live and die by! I apprehend that I shall not be long here, but this you may tell to any of my friends.”

And he added, “I have nothing to make me uneasy,

He raised me from the depths of sin,  
The gates of gaping hell;  
And fixed my standing more secure  
Than ‘twas before I fell.”

## A Few Last Words from Ebenezer Erskine

A friend, calling on Ebenezer Erskine during his last illness, said to him, “Sir, you have preached to others all these years; what are you now doing with your own soul?”

“I am doing with it,” he replied, “what I did forty years ago; I am resting on God’s Word, which says, ‘I am the Lord Thy God’; and, on this, I mean to die.”

To another he said, “The covenant of grace is my charter; and if it had not been for His grace in Christ, my hope and strength would perish.”

# When Doctrine Becomes Experience

John 12:41 says, *“When Isaiah saw His glory, he spake of Him.”* This is when doctrine becomes experience, ceremony and rituals give way to hearts communion, and the form of prayer is replaced by praise, thanksgiving and intercession. When we are enabled to see the glory of His grace, His election, His incarnation, His holiness, His justice, His intercession, and His glorious return, we will not only SPEAK of Him, but we will THINK of Him, REJOICE in Him, and LIVE for His glory!

This sight of Christ’s person and work, in all His redemptive glory, is not one that natural eyes can see; but it is beheld as the Spirit of God, using the Word of God, awakens us to our need and His sufficiency.

- 1.) When we learn of what happened in the garden and the consequences of that dreadful fall, we will see the glory of HIS GRACE to the sons of men.
- 2.) When we learn of our total inability and the impossibility of our ever coming to Christ apart from divine assistance, we will see the glory of HIS ELECTION. Election is not just a doctrine; it is a necessity.
- 3.) When we learn something of the corruption of the flesh and the sinfulness of our nature, we will see the glory of HIS INCARNATION. *“The Word was made flesh.”* What a wonder! What a mystery!
- 4.) When we learn of the holiness and strictness of His divine law, we will see the glory of HIS OBEDIENCE. *“He knew no sin.”* *“By His obedience many were made righteous.”*
- 5.) When we learn of the true wrath of God against sin and the unchanging justice of our Holy God, we will see the glory of HIS DEATH.
- 6.) When we learn of the sinfulness of our best deeds and the evil in our best works, we will see the glory of HIS INTERCESSION!

## Pray for one Another

In 1 Thessalonians 5:25 the apostle makes a simple, yet all-important, request; *“Brethren, pray for us.”* There is no more important area of the

believer's life than prayer. We dare not set one duty against another but, in what way can one better serve another than to diligently, sincerely, and lovingly intercede for one another before the throne of grace?

Samuel considered it a sin NOT to pray for his friends. *"Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you"* (1 Sam. 12:23).

I know that public prayer is an important part of our worship; but the prayer and intercession I encourage here is that personal, secret, and Spirit-led prayer which springs from genuine love and concern for one another. From the pastor to the youngest member, let us love one another with a fervent love and pray for one another every day.

## Jesus Christ Himself

If Christianity is the mere invention of men, an opiate of the people, or a foolish desire for a happy hunting ground, how do you explain Jesus Christ?

- 1.) His existence in history men cannot deny. He lived in this world. He was born in Bethlehem, walked this earth, died on a Roman cross, and witnesses claim that He arose from the grave.
- 2.) Without force or bribery, without arms or money, without an earthly kingdom or great possessions, He left a mark on this world as no other person in all of history! He never wrote a book, yet no library is sufficient to hold the books written about Him. He never wrote a song, yet He has been the theme of more songs than all others combined.
- 3.) All other religious leaders came to live; He came to die! All other messiahs chose as their followers the rich, powerful, and influential; He chose the poor, the despised, and the rejected. All other messiahs say, "Follow me, I'll show you the way." He said, "Follow me, I AM the way." All others claim to be messengers of God; He said, "I and the Father are One." All others stay dead; He arose and all His claims, promises, and work depend on His resurrection.

How do you explain Jesus Christ?

# True Repentance

True repentance has something to do with changing a man's HEART! When his heart is broken toward God, his habits will conform to his state of heart.

True repentance produces a proper ATTITUDE toward God, towards His commandments, and toward others; this, in turn, results in actions which adorn the gospel.

True repentance works on the MIND and the MOTIVES of believers, thus resulting in manners becoming the grace of God. This was why our Lord said, "*Cleanse FIRST that which is within...*"

It is impossible to reverse the procedure. Let us seek and pray for true conversion and repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

# No Place of Repentance

It is said of Esau that he "*found no way to change his mind, though he sought it carefully with tears.*"

Heb. 12:17

The birthright which Esau treated with contempt and sold for a mere morsel of meat was more than the greater part of his father's estate. The birthright was also a SPIRITUAL POSITION – God's man in the family. It carried with it spiritual blessings and divine favor. But Esau's desires were sensual and fleshly, so he threw aside the favor of God to satisfy his current desires, designs, and appetite. And when it came time for him to inherit the blessings, he was rejected and began to weep over his folly – too late.

Shall we be so foolish as to consider that anything the world may offer us is worth departing from the fellowship of the Lord and the gospel of His free grace? Those who are so foolish as to allow anything in this life to cause them to renounce their faith in Christ and leave the fellowship of Christ will, like Esau, someday weep bitter tears when it is impossible to recover that which is gone forever!

## How to Hear a Sermon

Quite often, after a sermon is over, people are heard to say, “Preacher, you sure stepped on my toes today,” or, “My, my, the preacher sure skinned us today”. Somehow, I feel that this type of response to the preaching of God’s Word indicates that there is something wrong with either the preaching or the hearing. When one can lightly pass off the profound mysteries of the gospel of God’s mercy with such meaningless comments, either he has not heard the glorious good news, or it has not been properly presented.

When the Master preached to His disciples, they said, “*Didn’t our HEARTS burn within us while He opened to us the Scriptures?*” When Peter preached at Pentecost, it is said, “*They were pricked in their HEARTS and cried, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” When Paul turned to the Gentiles with the gospel, the Scripture says, “*They were glad and GLORIFIED THE WORD OF THE LORD.*” This is so different from departing from the assembly with the flippant remark, “Well, he sure stepped on my toes.”

There is a duty to be performed BEFORE the sermon, DURING the sermon, and AFTER the sermon. My responsibility is to get a message from the Lord, bathe it in prayer and preparation, and seek the fullness of God’s Spirit. Your responsibility BEFORE the sermon is to pray for me and prepare your heart to hear the Word. Coming into God’s presence is no light matter; it is a most serious business. DURING the sermon let everyone hear with attention, interest, and an open heart. AFTER the sermon let every individual seek to apply the Word to both heart and life by retaining the preached Word in thought and conversation.

The Bereans heard the apostles and then SEARCHED the Word to see if these things be so! Our Lord condemned the Pharisees, saying, “*My Word hath no place in you*” (Jn. 8:37). Let’s give His Word the place it merits – FIRST PLACE! He has graciously promised to bless that Word to His glory and to our eternal good!

## Take Heed How You Hear

You will never be filled with grace nor grow in grace if you care not WHOM you hear nor WHAT you hear. “*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by*

*the Word of God*” (Rom. 10:17). Misery awaits the man who builds his hope on anything but God’s Word!

## The Day of Judgement

I can imagine the day of judgement; all are gathered before the throne of God. Those who are robed in the perfect robe of Christ’s righteousness are gathered to His right hand. The rest wait to hear His voice of condemnation, *“Depart from Me!”*

Does anyone have anything to say? If there be one who has no sin, let him step forth and say so. Come forth, my friend, and state your case! What about the righteousness and holiness in which you boasted while on earth? Come forward and tell about your works, your gifts, your denomination; you found much comfort in those things once.

You who scoffed at substitution, who laughed at free grace, imputed righteousness, and covenant mercies – you are not laughing now! You never trembled before but always had so much confidence in your decision and boasted of being as sure for heaven as if you were already there! Why do you not tell God what you did for Him on earth? It is quite evident that He did nothing for you.

But I remember that you said, “God has done all that he could do and salvation is up to you.” What a terrible time to discover what you should have known; *“SALVATION IS OF THE LORD!”* *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.”*

Why do you not speak? Is it because of the awesome, infinite HOLINESS OF HIS PRESENCE? You clutch your righteous garments about you and they are nothing but filthy rags now, and you know it! You think of your prayers, your religious activities, your debates over doctrine, and they are all so much rubbish in the light of His presence.

And now you are praying? What is it that you cry? *“O rocks and mountains, fall on me, and hide me from the face of Him that sits upon the throne.”* I wish that you had cried as fervently for Christ to hide you, cleanse you, and cover you – HE WOULD HAVE!

## The King's Highway

Never a PRAYER ascended to God save through the Lord Jesus Christ. Never has a BLESSING come down to man save through the same Divine Mediator. There is now a HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS on which the redeemed can walk with God and God can come to us.

The King's highway is Jesus Christ – the way, the truth, and the life. I urge you to believe on and trust in the Lord Jesus. The reason why we cannot come to God except through Christ is that, though God is love, mercy, and grace, we are unholy and impure. His holy eye cannot endure iniquity. God is just and his justice cannot tolerate sin. Therefore, we must have a God-appointed advocate. That advocate is His own well-beloved Son, who is our wisdom, righteousness, redemption, and sanctification.

Sinner, come to God in Christ! Come and welcome!

## Eternal Life

When we hear the expression "*eternal life*" many suppose that we speak of heaven or of life after death. We certainly do, but *eternal life* begins right here. It is not a future experience, but it begins in the believer as soon as he is born again. We have the same spiritual life now in Christ that we shall enjoy throughout eternity!

## Our Strength is Christ

How faint the best praise! How wandering the best prayer! How selfish the best gift! When we feel that we are nearest to God, how far off we are! When we feel that we are most like God, how unlike God we are!

What did the apostle say? "*When I am weak, then am I strong.*" Our strength is always Christ, never in anything we are or do!

# The Lord Has Heard Us...Shall we not Then Speak?

*"I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and He heard me out of His holy hill."*

Psalm 3:4

The Lord heard me when I cried for mercy in Christ. He abundantly pardoned my sins and gave me a good hope through grace. He has heard my voice in prayer every day and so graciously blessed and supplied every need. If He is not pleased to grant another earthly blessing, I can still say that I have been the object of special love and favor. This being the case, I want to learn THREE LESSONS:

1.) He shall hear my voice IN PRAISE! If He has heard me pray, then He shall hear me give thanks. If He has heard me when tears were in my eyes, then He shall hear my voice of thanksgiving when my eyes laugh and rejoice. My communion with God shall not be confined to the sickbed and the dungeons of despair.

2.) He has heard my voice; then I SHALL HEAR HIS VOICE! What did the prophet say? *"Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth"* (1 Sam. 3:10). How foolish is the man who would talk to God in prayer but seldom takes down the blessed Word of God that he may hear God speak to him. May God ever deliver us from pride of grace, for all that we are or have is His gift and work. But I do believe His infallible, inspired Word means more to me now than ever before. I find all that I need in this divine book. Feeding upon it gives me hope, strength, and grace; neglecting it leaves me empty and depressed.

3.) I have talked to God about my friends, and He heard me; then I shall TALK TO MY FRIENDS ABOUT GOD: perhaps they will hear.

"I will tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Saviour I have found."<sup>7</sup>

Is it possible that we cannot name one person whom we have brought to hear the gospel or been the instrument used by the Spirit of God to give them the good news of Christ?

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<sup>7</sup>Cennick, John. *Jesus, My All, to Heaven is Gone*. Sacred Hymns for the Use of Religious Societies. 1743.

## **Do not be Distracted by Matters of Dispute**

I was greatly impressed, while reading Mr. Spurgeon this week, by a statement he made regarding those who spend most of their life trying to resolve the deep and mysterious theological questions. He said, "There is the puzzling problem concerning the origin of evil. I am no 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 consider 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 a pre, post, or a-millennialist, 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 into the rest of your Sabbath, but a man cannot be saved who has not ceased from his labors and entered into the rest of Christ.

## **There is Only One Mediator**

If I bow my knee before Mary, before a man on earth, or seek the intercession of any created being except the one Person ordained of God

to be THE MEDIATOR between God and men, I rob Christ of His greatness and glory.

God has one Mediator, Jesus Christ, because man needs a mediator. And He has no more mediators because none other is needed or required. You may come to Christ as you are, for He came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

## I Dared to Call Him Father

Bilguis Sheikh, a Muslim woman, described how she truly found the Lord. She had been brought up in the religion of Islam, in which God is pictured as a distant, faraway, stern figure to whom one has the duty to submit but never know. She came to Christ and discovered to her great joy the God and Father of our Lord Jesus.

She wrote her story in a book and the title of the book sums up the wonderful reality which she found out about the Lord God. It is called *I Dared to Call Him Father*.

Knowing God is not a religion of slavish fear; it is a deep, holy, and joyful relationship with the Father in Christ. *“You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave to fear, but you received THE SPIRIT OF SONSHIP, and by Him we cry, Abba, Father”* (Rom. 8:15).

*Abba* is an Aramaic word for “daddy”.

## The Good News of What God Has Done

Inquirers are often counselled to *give their hearts to Christ*, or to *consecrate themselves to the Lord*, or to *accept Jesus as their personal Saviour*. I would not be over-critical with what is sometimes meant well, but this is not the gospel!

The good news of God’s grace is that God hath given to us eternal life and redemption through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is totally and completely of the Lord. It is not something we do for God or even something we cooperate with God in doing for ourselves; but, from beginning to end, the work of redemption,

sanctification, and glorification is God's gift to us IN CHRIST. We receive Him, we believe Him, we look to Him; and, in so doing, all the blessings of life flow to us in Him.

Having received Christ, having become a partaker of His converting grace, and having received a new nature, we delight in His law and His fellowship. We long to be like Him in conduct, conversation, and attitude. We long to adorn the gospel of His free grace by being gracious and grateful.

## A Sure Hope

Concerning the character of God, what gross mistakes men make! I believe the root and foundation of all error in theology comes from ignorance of the character and attributes of God Himself. Arminian theology makes God out to be less than He is. Men receive false doctrine because they do not have a clear understanding of the omnipotence, holiness, immutability, or sovereignty of God.

If God is given His rightful place we will, like Isaiah, see His holiness and our sinfulness and cry out, "*Woe is me! I am cut off!*" (Is. 6:5). The necessity of a suitable mediator, a sufficient sacrifice, and a God-honoring righteousness will become evident. 1 Corinthians 1:30 ("*But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption...*") will take on a new and essential meaning.

The greatness, importance, and power of your religion depend entirely on the greatness, glory, and power of YOUR GOD. The depth of a man's worship depends on the majesty and greatness of the God he worships. The strength of a man's faith depends on the power and ability of the God he believes. "*Abraham believed God that HE WAS ABLE to perform all that He promised*" (Rom. 4:21).

The peace and rest a man enjoys depend on his confidence in the God who controls the flight of an angel or a fly; the flash of lightning or the glimmer of a glowworm. The assurance of redemption and hope of eternal life that a man enjoys depend not upon his works, faithfulness, nor his own righteousness, but on the sufficient, effectual obedience and substitutionary death of the one Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who cannot fail

in all that He undertook as surety and representative of His elect, given to Him by the Father.

Give me a sovereign, omnipotent Lord of heaven and earth, with authority over all the universe of men and angels, and I will preach to you a SURE HOPE of mercy and grace!

## The Love of God is Seen Inside the Ark

I have often reminded people of what a ridiculous thing it would have been if Noah had put one of our bumper stickers on the OUTSIDE of the ark, which says, “SMILE, GOD LOVES YOU”. But my son, Paul, called one fact to my attention – that this sign could have been stamped all over the INSIDE of the ark; for those in the ark were certainly the objects of God’s love.

His love chose them, redeemed them from destruction, and preserved them, just as His love in Christ chose, redeemed, and preserves all His elect. *“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”*

## The Trying of Faith

Trials and afflictions do not make us what we are; they REVEAL what we are. Trials (however light or severe) do not *produce* faith; they *reveal* faith! How a man reacts to the providence of God reveals his thoughts toward God and his true relationship with the Lord.

The sun melts the ice and hardens the clay. The effect produced on each is determined by the NATURE of the object. The soldier who lays down his weapon and flag under fire was never a soldier IN HEART, but only wore the uniform in the parade. He is called a deserter and is held up to ridicule and shame. *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust him!”* (Job 13:15).

## Religion Without Christ

Without Christ crucified, religion is no more than pagan ritualism. All religions have their messiahs, ceremonies, laws, rewards, and punishments. Only the gospel has a crucified, risen, ascended Redeemer. Beware of any hope of the favor of God, acceptance with God, or forgiveness from God apart from the obedience and blood of Christ.

“When the Saviour said, ‘Tis finished,’

Everything was fully done;

Done as God Himself would have it –

Christ the victory won.”<sup>8</sup>

## Christian Unity

Paul wrote to the Ephesians, *“I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called...forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

Eph. 4:1-2

There are no two churches, preachers, nor Christians who agree on every point of doctrine, every point of church government, discipline and practice, every point of the law and Christian liberty, nor every program, missionary, and effort to be supported. Someday we will all be like Christ, having the perfect understanding, thoughts, and discernment of our Lord; but, UNTIL THEN, each church, pastor, and believer can only walk and act as the Word of God and the Holy Spirit give them light and leadership.

When we sit about in private conversation and criticize one another, write sharp articles and letters, or take shots at one another from the pulpit, we serve the purpose of the enemy of God, reveal our self-righteousness, and seriously damage the unity of believers.

If we love Christ’s church, if we love the servants of God, if we seek only the glory of God and long to see His kingdom prosper in every city

<sup>8</sup> Midlane, Albert. *Believe and Live*. No. 535 C.H. Spurgeon’s Our Own Hymnbook. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1862.

where He has established a witness for the gospel of grace, let us refuse to be drawn into this terrible practice of *“biting and devouring one another.”* Paul warned these critics and examiners of others that *“they would be consumed one of another”* (Gal. 5:14-15).

Criticism and fault-finding are not of the Spirit of Christ and reveal a poor understanding of our own natures and the grace of God in Christ! *“BY THIS shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you LOVE ONE ANOTHER”* (Jn. 13:35).

## Sanctification

In sanctification, do we wash and cleanse ourselves? No, it is grace that does it. It is the beauty of the Lord our God; we are holy and beautiful through the righteousness He puts upon us.

Grace is laying aside our flimsy fig leaves and putting on the holiness of Christ. Works is laying aside the righteousness of Christ and reaching for our fig leaves. Let the filthy leaves be despised and forgotten, for we are *“accepted in the Beloved”* in all that we need and in all that He requires!

## The Name of The Lord Jesus Christ

*“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”*

Acts 16:31

WHAT we are to believe is clearly set forth in the NAME of the Lord Jesus Christ! His character, His office, His redemptive work, and His glory are all declared in the name ***The Lord Jesus Christ.***

- 1.) THE LORD declares His deity, eternality, and authority. We bow before Him and cry with Thomas, *“My Lord and my God”* (Jn. 20:28).
- 2.) JESUS is His name of humiliation, humanity, obedience, and death. We know that He was identified and numbered with the transgressors that He might IN ALL THINGS be our faithful High Priest.

3.) CHRIST – yes, Jesus is the Christ! *“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?”* (1 Jn. 2:22).

When we understand all which is included in THAT NAME, we see more clearly what Paul meant when he said, *“Whosoever shall call upon THE NAME of the Lord shall be saved”* (Rom. 10:13).

## **Holiness of Life**

The first argument for holiness of life is that if you know that Christ, our Lord, is righteous and obedient to the Father’s will in action, thought, and words, you also know that those who are begotten of Him (in like manner) will seek to be like Him in righteousness and obedience to the Father’s will.

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 love and desire the will and ways of God! *“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him”* (1 Jn. 2:29).

## **Give no Advantage to the Enemy**

It is perfectly evident to all who know the grace of God in Christ that we have spent this past [conference] week under the favor of God and have been especially blessed with His presence and power. As far as I can determine, every service, every message, and every song honored Christ and blessed His people. This church can give special thanks to the Lord for giving us THE PRIVILEGE of hosting such a conference and entertaining His people from all over the world.

I would not sound a blue note nor discourage you, particularly at this time, when the church seems to be in such harmony and unity and rejoicing in the blessings of the Lord; but, these are the times when we need to be aware of, and on guard against, the attacks of Satan.

Where God blesses, Satan rears up his ugly head. When God manifests His mercies, Satan usually organizes some form of opposition or trouble. Paul wrote of this II Corinthians 2:11, *“to keep Satan from getting the*

*advantage over us; for we are not ignorant of his wiles and intentions (Amplified Version).*

HE IS THE ENEMY, not men or movements; but he is the great antichrist. He will use even the Apostle Peter for his purposes. And if that be true, only the grace of God will keep him from using you and me to trouble the family of God. Let our prayers be most diligent in this area, *“deliver us from the evil one!”* (Mt. 6:13).

Let not Satan get the advantage and destroy that which glorifies our great God. Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto the Lord Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

## To See His Glory

*When Isaiah saw His glory, he spake of Him”*

John 12:41

When a man sees the glory of the Redeemer, CHRIST BECOMES HIS MESSAGE. Everything else fades into insignificance before the glory of Jesus Christ; His creative glory, His incarnate glory, His redemptive glory, His resurrected glory, His mediatorial glory, and His coming glory.

When we see His glory, we will speak in HUMILITY, *“Woe is me.”* We will speak of OUR SINS, *“I am a man of unclean lips.”* We will speak in OBEDIENCE, *“Here am I, send me.”* We will make known His greatest glory, *“He was wounded for our transgressions, and by His stripes we are healed.”*

*“I am determined,”* Paul said, *“to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”* Paul had seen His glory, too. I may be accused of having only one message and playing a one-string fiddle – so be it! I have seen His glory, therefore everything else is vanity.

My one desire is that you see it, and the only way you will see His glory is for us to preach it!

## Trouble in the Flesh

John Bunyan once said, “A believer is seldom long at ease; when one trial is gone, another doth him seize.”<sup>9</sup> We can be sure that when we are on the mountain top, the valley is not far away. We have many joys, but we must have afflictions. The apostle called it, “*trouble in the flesh*” (1 Cor. 7:28).

Sometimes these troubles come from our family relationships. Those whose lives are interwoven with ours NATURALLY cause us great grief SPIRITUALLY. Christ said, “*A man’s enemies will be those of his own household*” (Mt. 10:36). How can it be otherwise? The people of this world never did understand the people of God and they never will. “*Light came into the world and the DARKNESS COMPREHENDED IT NOT*” (Jn. 3:19). How can darkness do anything to light but oppose it? Light and darkness can’t mix; oil and water will not mix; and it cannot be expected that the believer shall have peace with the unbeliever, whether they live across the street or in the same house.

When King David came home from that high and holy adventure with God, when he brought the ark back to the tabernacle, who should meet him at the door with sarcasm, criticism, and ridicule but his own wife! When I look at David singing and dancing before the ark, how happy he is! How filled with the joy of the Lord! But I know what is ahead and so do you. And it will hurt more because it will come from the most unexpected source – his own dear wife! Satan works in this manner; “*wounded in the house of my friends*” (Zech. 13:6).

Husbands, wives, children, parents, and close friends who do not know our Lord and His sovereign, free, and redeeming grace will not help us on our heavenly journey but will do all they can do to wound and hurt. This, too, we will endure and accept as the good providence of the Lord!

## Cain and Abel

When we read the story of these two men, it is evident that they had much in common. They had the same parents. They were both born and

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<sup>9</sup> Spurgeon, Charles H. *A Bottle in the Smoke*. Sermon no. 71. New Park Street Pulpit. Vol. 2. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1856.

raised outside the garden. Both had received the same religious instructions. Both came to worship and brought offerings to God. But they differed in their understanding of God's character, the nature of sin, and the way to approach God.

All men and women are much the same. The natural differences are superficial. We may differ in our ACTS of sin, but there is no difference as to the FACT of sin!

This difference in understanding led these men to bring different sacrifices to God. Abel, evidently aware of God's instructions, in faith and godly fear, brought a slain lamb, typical of the blood of Christ. In this sacrifice, Abel confessed he was worthy of death and that without the shedding of blood there was no forgiveness of sin nor approach to God. Cain's offering of his own works, the fruit of the ground (that which God had cursed), denied his guilt and professed that he was righteous. Abel trusted the Lord; Cain trusted in his works. O, what a difference!

Abel is a type of the believer in salvation by grace through faith in Christ. Cain is a type of the religious of all generations and persuasions who seek God's favor by their own doings.

## Hard Hearts

Men's hearts are spiritually hard. The world can win a man's heart, gold can win a man's heart, fame and popularity can win a man's heart; but there is not a minister living who can win a man's heart to God.

We can reach the eye, the ear, and the head, but not the heart. The poet said,

“Speak with that voice that wakes the dead,  
And bid the sleeper rise,  
And bid his guilty conscience dread  
The death that never dies.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Wesley, Charles. *Thou Son of God, Whose Flaming Eyes*. Hymns for the Use of Families. London: 1767.

## Preach to the Whole Man

There is a danger of talking more about salvation than about the Saviour. There is a danger of preaching redemption and neglecting to preach the Redeemer. It could be that we know much about justification and little about Jesus Christ, His person and His work. One thing is certain – a man will arrive at right doctrine through Christ, but it is also possible for him to have orthodox doctrine and yet not know Christ. The gospel is not a collection of dry doctrines; it is the revelation of a living, merciful, and ever-present Lord.

Men and women are not going to come to hear you preach “the doctrines of grace”. But if needy sinners get wind of the fact that you are preaching “the grace of Christ”, they will give you a hearing. When you only preach to my head in facts so numerous and terms so tedious, you weary me, and forget that I am a human with emotions and a hungry HEART! I laugh, I cry, I love, I feel, I sorrow, I doubt, I fear, and I need a minister with whom I can identify in all these, who has the message of God’s mercy; not cold, calculated creeds which ignore these human traits.

The Arminian cheerleader sings joyful hymns, weeps, laughs, rejoices, and calls for men to commit themselves to a movement with NO message of hope nor assurance. The Calvinistic professor stands rigidly in his pulpit of pious orthodoxy, daring not to weep lest he be called emotional, daring not to laugh lest he be thought frivolous, daring not to call mourners or seekers lest he be called a free-willer, daring not to let people know him or get close to him lest he lose their respect and awe. Someone may find out he is only a sinner saved by grace.

“Lord, deliver me from having to listen to either one of them, and send me an Elijah of like passions who will minister to my heart and to my head – to the whole man.”

## Three Things

Three things a believer should labor to maintain:

the honor and glory of GOD;

the honor and truth of THE GOSPEL;

and the integrity of his own NAME AND CHARACTER.

## Just a Greeting Card

In the morning mail, there was a different shaped envelope, not like your standard letter but with the name and address properly written. Inside was a brightly colored card which said something like, “Happy Birthday, may this and all of your future days be blessed with the mercies and love of our God.” But, to me, that little greeting card said MUCH MORE! Its message went far beyond its printed words and entitled that card to be received and handled with special attention.

- 1.) That card says someone THINKS OF YOU even when you are not with them.
- 2.) That card says someone LOVES YOU AND CARES ENOUGH ABOUT YOU to give you a part of his day; enough to go to the store, look through cards, and find one that will convey his thoughts and best wishes to you; enough to sit down, address it, and carry it to the mailbox.
- 3.) That card says that you HAVE A FRIEND. You are not alone. You are appreciated for who you are and what you have done.
- 4.) That card carries with it a wish, a desire, or a PRAYER FOR YOUR WELL-BEING and prosperity in soul and body.

My conclusion: never treat a card, a note, or a letter with anything but the tenderest of care and respond as soon as you can; for it brings to you a part of the sender.

## A Real Friend

A real friend can make your way a little smoother, your burden a little lighter, your heart a little warmer, and your day a little brighter.

## Pray and Stay

Someone said, “Two little words are good for every believer to learn and to practice – PRAY and STAY!” We have enough exhortation and encouragements in the Scriptures to pray without ceasing, about everything, and in the spirit of thanksgiving, that I do not need to elaborate on this.

But PATIENCE and PERSERVERANCE in trial, in place of service, in faithfulness to worship, the gospel, and our calling are so needful! “STAY – wait on the Lord.” God is in no hurry because He is all-wise and almighty.

We have a way of wanting everything to be done within the hour, and not to accomplish it right away discourages us. *“I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord”* (Ps. 27:13-14).

## Christ Must Have the Preeminence!

Christ Jesus is first in ALL THINGS. He must have the preeminence! He has all authority in heaven and earth. He has the glory before time, in time, and after time. He is the cause of all that’s done in this world in the world to come.

When the Scripture says, *“He is the first fruits of them that rise again”* (1 Cor. 15:20), it is saying that God chose Christ and then He chose us. God justified Christ by His resurrection, thereby justifying us because He bore our sins and was numbered with the transgressors.

We will rise against because He is risen. Christ ascended and we will ascend. Christ is first loved; we are loved in the Beloved. Christ is first blessed, and we have all spiritual blessings in Him. He is the first and the last – Alpha and Omega, the author and finisher of our faith.

“All hail the power of Jesus’ Name!

Let angels prostrate fall;

Bring forth the royal diadem,

And crown Him Lord of all.”<sup>11</sup>

## Preach the Truth No Matter What

Everyone is aware of the popularity of Mr. Spurgeon among today’s preachers. He is read, quoted, and referred to by preachers of all denominations and persuasions. It was not so when he was alive and preaching in London. He once wrote to a friend, “Scarcely a Baptist minister of standing will own me!”<sup>12</sup> In another letter, he commented that “contemporary preachers ARE ARAID OF REAL GOSPEL CALVINISM.”<sup>13</sup> The famous preacher, Thomas Binney, heard Spurgeon preach in 1855 and declared, “I never heard SUCH THINGS in all my life before.”<sup>14</sup>

It is heartbreaking and disappointing to be shunned and criticized and misrepresented by those who profess to know Christ, especially by those who are supposed to be fellow ministers for the glory of Christ. But the old truth that Paul preached, that which the reformers preached, and that which Spurgeon preached is the truth that I must also preach or else be false to my conscience, my God, and my hearers. We have no right to tamper with the gospel of His glory – nor do we have permission to tone down the truth, to pare off the rough edges of a doctrine, to rob the gospel of its offense, or to use methods, literature, and “silence” to “get along” with today’s religionists!

Unfortunately, much of the opposition to those who dare to preach what they believe (sometimes at a high cost) comes from those who are not willing to pay the price. A preacher once said to another, “I DO NOT SEE election and predestination.” The man took a piece of money, laid it over the word election, and said, “It’s even harder to see now, isn’t it?”

Looking at the Word through our ambitions, possessions, and general welfare surely does make some things “hard to see.”

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<sup>11</sup>Perronet, Edward. *All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name*. Union Harmony or Universal Collection of Sacred Music. Boston: 1793.

<sup>12</sup>Spurgeon, Charles H. *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon Compiled From his Diary, Letter, and Records by His Wife and His Private Secretary*. Vol.2 1854-1860. New York: Fleming H. Revel Company. 1899. Reprinted by Banner of Truth Trust. 1962.

<sup>13</sup>Ray, Charles. *The Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*. London: Passmore and Alabaster. 1903.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

## Wait on the Lord

When we are tempted to complain and find fault with the good providence of our Lord, it would do well for us to read the Scripture in Habakkuk 3:17-18, *“Though the fig tree does not blossom, and there be no fruit on the vines, though the product of the olive fail, and though the fields yield no food, though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no cattle in the stalls, YET I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD; I will exult in the victorious God of my salvation”* (Amplified Version).

Also, the words of Job, *“Though He slay me, YET WILL I TRUST HIM”* (Job 13:15). Because the water is not gushing forth at the rate we desire is no reason to the ONLY FOUNTAIN. David insisted on our waiting on the Lord, *“for HE SHALL strengthen our hearts”* (Ps. 24:14).

Good things come to those who in faith wait on the Lord

## A Word from Mr. Whitefield

A man cannot speak peace to his heart who has not, in his heart, come to rest in Christ the justifier, redeemer, sanctifier, and mediator.

Mr. Whitefield once said, “You have no reason to hope for peace until (to some degree) you have dealt with SIN, what we ARE by birth and nature; with SINS, what we HAVE DONE in word, thought, and deed; with UNBELIEF, the fountain of all sin; with RIGHTEOUSNESS, both our own (which is filthy rags) and His own (which is perfect); and Christ’s LORDSHIP! Can a man claim Christ as Saviour who will not bow to Christ as Lord?”<sup>15</sup>

## Six Stubborn Statements

I realize, as much as any of you, that we are out of step with the great parade of religion today. I realize we are putting a question mark on some

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<sup>15</sup>Paraphrased from George Whitefield’s sermon on Jeremiah 6:14 *The Method of Grace*. Found in the compilation *Select Sermons of George Whitefield*. Edited by J.C. Ryle. Reprinted by Banner of Truth. 1986.

very successful religious organizations and in conflict with all the major denominations. I realize that we are charging some popular, recognized, powerful, and hard-working preachers and religious leaders with failure to preach the true gospel of God's glory and grace. We are charging them with the crime of preaching "another gospel". This is serious; for Paul said, *"If any man preach any other gospel, let him be accursed"* (Gal. 1:8). I realize that we are a very small minority compared with the vast religious movement of this day. But, to me, the issues are as clear as the sun!

- 1.) God is infinitely sovereign in all things, including salvation; or He isn't sovereign at all.
- 2.) Man, in the fall, was rendered spiritually dead, without hope, without God, without Christ, and is shut up to the power of God to give him life; or he is not dead at all.
- 3.) God either elected a people to eternal salvation according to the good pleasure of His sovereign will; or He did not choose anyone and has left the success of His purpose to save totally in the hands of the creature.
- 4.) Christ either sufficiently, effectually, and eternally saved those for whom He died, by His obedience and death; or He actually saved no one! The ransom was no ransom at all, only an offer.
- 5.) The eternal Spirit of God either effectually and powerfully quickens, regenerates, and calls the elect to repentance toward God and to faith in Christ; or extends an offer to all sinners to regenerate themselves. We must go back to the question, "Is man dead?"
- 6.) All the elect of God will be preserved by His grace and will persevere in the faith of Christ; or none will. For, if left to ourselves, we shall eventually fall as all creatures have.

## **Carnal Religion**

The peculiar, crowning feature of salvation by grace in Christ is that all of God's work BEGINS WITHIN and BEARS FRUIT WITHOUT. Other religions – like that of the Pharisees – begin with outward form, rules, and duties, hoping that these things will commend us to God and motivate men to godliness.

Carnal religion gives men a day to keep, a tithe to pay, rules to obey, and duties to perform; but, our God, in regeneration, gives a sinner A NEW HEART, A NEW SPIRIT, and sheds abroad THE LOVE OF GOD WITHIN. And this ALWAYS results in an obedient and godly walk.

Surround a tiger with bars, whips, and rewards and he will do no harm; but, he is still a wild beast! However, give that tiger the nature of a lamb and you can remove the bars and lay down the whip.

## A Note on Giving

Our church family has many things for which to be thankful! God has blessed us with a knowledge of His grace in Christ. He has given us a love for one another and a fellowship that is unsurpassed on this earth. He has favored us with His blessings on this assembly for 32 years, supplying our needs, allowing us to preach the gospel to thousands here and around the world by television, tapes, and the printed word, and giving us the privilege of helping to support some of His choice missionaries and traveling preachers.

He has raised up preachers from among us and sent them to preach and pastor His sheep. He has brought to our pulpit, for our congregation to hear, pastors from all over the world. He has permitted us to bring together and to entertain His people in 30 Bible conferences.

Your faith, generosity, and message are spoken of throughout the world. The Lord continues to open doors for us to proclaim His Word and to encourage other pastors and churches. Let us give thanks, let us be humbled before our God, and let us not be wearied nor grow selfish regarding OUR OWN THINGS.

If we are to glorify God, do His will, and minister to His people everywhere, we must do so with an open hand and heart. We cannot look only upon our own assembly, services, general welfare, and comfort. If we can say, "Lord, here are our pastor, our elders, and our young men; send them out to preach and teach. Here are our gifts; show us where to bestow them for your glory. Here is our building, our people, our equipment, and our time; let it all be used in the ministry of Christ, our Lord, to call out and encourage His sheep." In doing so God will

continue to bless us as He has; for, our Lord said, *“Give and it shall be given to you”* (Lk. 6:38).

## The Exalted Lord

CHRIST MUST BE PREACHED WHERE HE IS NOW IF WE ARE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL OF HIS GLORY! Men will preach about, even accept, Christ as prophet, teacher, healer, and even as Saviour; but, the preaching of 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 Him is easy to believe. His resurrection declared Him to the Son of God; His exaltation declares Him to be LORD! Peter closed his message in Acts 2 with these words; *“God hath 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 judgement, and all revelation into His hands.

CHRIST MUST BE PREACHED WHERE HE IS NOW IF WE ARE TO CORRECTLY RECEIVE HIM AND CALL UPON HIS NAME! Romans 10:9 says, *“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord...thou shalt be saved.”* Romans 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.

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!

## The Chief Ignorance of Man

Most men know that there is a God. *“They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge”* (Rom. 10:2). And their chief ignorance lies in the degree of His holiness and their sinfulness.

### “Sanctify the Lord God in Your Hearts”

*“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”*

I Peter 3:15

God is infinitely and perfectly holy. We do not make Him so; but we regard, proclaim, and declare Him to be our holy and sovereign Lord in two ways:

1.) EXTERNALLY. The Lord is sanctified by His people externally when they obey His word, believe Him, worship Him, praise Him, and call upon Him.

2.) INTERNALLY. This verse exhorts us to sanctify the Lord in OUR HEARTS. Unless we truly believe Him, love Him, and worship Him in our hearts, all our outwards forms and claims are nothing but sham. It is mockery to talk of His glory with my lips if I do not bless God in my heart.

**“BE READY TO GIVE AN ANSWER,”** the apostle continues. When someone asks you to tell him why you believe that your sins are pardoned, that your name is in the Book of Life, and that you will enjoy the presence of Christ forever, be ready always to give a scriptural answer. It is because Christ Jesus is your RIGHTEOUSNESS before the law, Christ Jesus, by His death, is your JUSTIFICATION and REDEMPTION, and Christ Jesus is your MEDIATOR before God’s throne!

**“WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR.”** Give that answer in a most humble fashion; for we are what we are by the grace of God, not because of anything that we are or have done. Give that answer in *“THE FEAR OF THE LORD”*, being careful that He gets all the glory for His blessings.

Also, give that answer courteously and respectfully; it may be the person is a true seeker of the Lord.

## What Think Ye of Christ?

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

## Faith in Christ

*“He that heareth my Word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life.”*

John 5:24

There are many false religious refuges in which men hide and many false claims to a hope of glory which will be shattered at the judgement. One such refuge is religious orthodoxy and sound theology without a personal faith in – and commitment to – the Lord Jesus.

SAUL OF TARSUS was a student of the Scriptures, a man of high morality and integrity, a believer in the sovereignty of God and election (he believed the Jews were god’s elect). He fought for what he believed. But Saul had never been brought to a personal knowledge of Christ Jesus, an understanding of His person and work, and a genuine, open committal to Christ. The fact that he was one of the elect, that he would one day preach the gospel, that he would one day seal his testimony with his blood, did not alter the fact that he was a lost sinner who must HEAR the voice of God in His Word and BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ.

You may be as orthodox as an old, studious Puritan and as sincere in your contention for the doctrines of grace as Calvin himself; but, if the Holy Spirit has not brought the Word of the gospel to your heart in conviction of your sin, sins, and righteous rags; if the Holy Spirit has not revealed (through the Word of God) Christ to your heart in faith,

committal, and love, you will hear Christ say to you, “*Depart from me, I never knew you*” (Mt. 7:23).

It is not faith in doctrine that saves, nor even faith in God’s power to save, but FAITH IN CHRIST! Anyone who believes there is a God knows that being God enables Him to do what He will! But what will God do? He will redeem men in Christ; He will love men in Christ; He will accept men in Christ; He will save all who are in Christ; and that not by election alone, but BY FAITH! “*Without faith it is impossible to please God*” (Heb. 11:6). “*He that BELIEVETH NOT shall be damned*” (Mk. 16:16).

Once more I set before you the gospel of Jesus Christ and call upon you to believe HIM, look to HIM, and confess HIM publicly as YOUR LORD AND SAVIOUR!

## **Do Not Waste That Which You Have Been Given**

There is nothing that we have as children of God, whether in nature or grace, that is not the gift of God. As each of you has received a particular talent, endowment, or ability (whether physical, material, or spiritual), you are to use that gift or blessing as a faithful steward.

God did not give you what you have, or make you what you are, that you might consume it on your own lust or provide for your own comfort and satisfaction, but that you might serve His purpose, glorify His name, and help His people.

Let the beauty of Christ, the love of Christ, and the generosity and grace of Christ be seen in you!

## **Take Care How You Hear**

You will never grow in grace if you care not WHOM you hear nor WHAT you hear.

# **The Haves and the Have Nots**

He who has Christ, needs nothing more.

He who knows not and loves not Christ, enjoys nothing.