

## **Bulletin Articles Of Henry Mahan For the Year 1985**

### **How Can We be Ashamed of Him?**

How can we be ashamed of Him who has saved us with an eternal salvation? Of Him who has called us by His Holy Spirit into His righteousness and to a participation of all His grace? Of Him who redeemed us and made us His own, not according to our works (at any time, either before or after our calling) but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ before the foundation of the world?

The Lord God chose us in Christ, gave His beloved Son to redeem us, would not leave us in sin but called us to Himself and accepted us in the Beloved. To be ashamed of Him, His Word, His kingdom, His blood, His people, or His grace would be unthinkable!

**“For unto us a child is born, unto us a  
Son is given.”**

Isaiah 9:6

It is a fact there was a child born of woman, made under the law to redeem sinners. It is a fact that Son is given. As the Son of God, He is not born but given! He is begotten – not made. But the question is, “Is this child born to us? Is this Son given to us?”

1.) He is born to us *if we are born to him*. Let no man say that Christ is his redeemer if he has not been born again of God's Spirit. Only regenerated persons can claim a union with this child.

2.) He is given to us *if we are given to him*. "All that my Father giveth me shall come to me" (Jn. 6:37). "Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. 2:13). God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. He chose us in Christ. He chose us in Christ because He would populate heaven with a people like Christ, and all of this according to the good pleasure of His will (Eph. 1:3-5).

3.) This Son is given to us *if we are sons*. The Son of God is not mine to enjoy, to love, and to delight in if I am not a son of God, too. If you can call God "Father" you can lay claim to a joint-heirship with Christ (Jn. 1:12).

## **This is no Sham Salvation**

The notion of the world is that salvation in Christ is an emotional dream – a lot of sentiment and feeling. But there is nothing dreamy about it. It is not fiction but fact upon fact. The Lord Jesus does not gloss over nor conceal the condition of those whom He came to save. He finds us guilty, condemned in the worst sense; and, as our substitute, He endures the penalty for our sins and dies in our stead. He takes us as we are and deals with us as we are.

The Lord Jesus meets the law of God as it is; holy, unchangeable, and exact. He does not alter the law nor brand it as being too stern, too exacting, nor too holy. He is made under the law as it is and, in the flesh, He honored and obeyed the law in every jot and tittle.

Christ deals with us as we are, He deals with us as the law is, and He deals with us as God is; on the principles of pure righteousness and justice. If there is anything questionable or uncertain in the work that Christ has done to redeem us (either in honoring the law

or satisfying God's justice), it may fail us at last. But our foundation is *sure*.

Christ is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. He has taken away all sham, sentiment, and idle claims. We are absolutely complete in Him. A God who could save without righteousness may condemn without reason. A God who could waive His justice may waive His mercy.

## Tell Me About Your Lord

I question today's easy believism which obligates God but does not glorify God; which designates Jesus Christ as Saviour but denies Him His Lordship. Rolfe Barnard used to say, "Don't talk to me so much about your Saviour, but tell me who your Lord is. *Somebody is your Lord!* Whoever your Lord is, his servant you are!"

What do we say to our generation? "Accept Jesus as your Saviour?" It's hard to find anyone who *has not* already done that! Or do we say, "Cease from self and bow to the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ?" It is hard to find anyone who *has* done that! Christ will be *Lord of all!*

## Electing Love

We preach election because there is not a single blessing that comes to us from the hand of our Redeemer that is not stamped with the hand of God's electing love. The Scriptures say, "*God hath chosen you to salvation.*" Again, "*He hath chosen us that we should be holy.*" Again, "*The God of our fathers hath chosen thee that thou shouldst know His will.*"

It is not in ourselves that these blessings are constrained. We have them because of *our union with Christ*, and we are united with Christ

because of the Father's divine and sovereign choice. Let us never imagine that the atoning sacrifice of Christ was intended to make an angry God willing to be merciful. That is not the truth. Jesus Christ died, not to create mercy and love in the heart of God, but to open a just and righteous way for that mercy and love which is there from all eternity.

God's mercy and love went forth to us before the Saviour came. *that's why he came!* Spiritual blessings are heavenly blessings. They come from heaven and are of a heavenly nature. We enjoy these in Christ because He has purchased them for us and has gone there to possess them for us in His own name.

All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. It all starts with God's sovereign choice.

## Give Thanks

This, my friend, should be our desire and goal – to be able, in sincerity and truth, to rejoice in the Lord always, and in *everything* to give thanks!

## Preaching

Preaching is more than a religious ceremony or some facts to be debated, accepted, or rejected. True preaching is God speaking through a man and carries with it a call – a command from the living God to be received and obeyed.

## He Preached Grace

No greater acclamation could any preacher have than this: “He preached grace – abundantly.”

## The Believer’s Hope

Somewhere between proud presumption and dead despair is the believer’s hope. Somewhere between fleshly familiarity with deity and slavish fear there is the believer’s hope. Somewhere between modern, easy-believism and medieval fatalism there is the believer’s hope.

Someone once said, “God has hedged us about on one side with His promises of mercy lest we despair, and he has hedged us about on the other side with warnings of apostasy lest we presume.”

I have read in the Scriptures of those who laid down their lives for Him, but I have also read of those who “*walked no more with Him.*” In thirty-one years of preaching I have seen some who continued in the faith until God called them home; but, I have seen others who have lost interest in the gospel and ended up with a life of nothing but tradition, doctrine, and an old experience.

Jeremiah sounds a clear note on the believer’s hope in Lamentations 3:22-24. “*It is the Lord’s mercy that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith the soul, therefore will I HOPE IN HIM.*”

The Lord is my inheritance, my joy and my delight – not just His pardon but His *presence*; not just His blessings but His *being*; not just His heavenly place but His *holy person*.

A.B. Simpson caught the truth in his poem:

“Once it was the blessing; now it is the Lord;  
Once it was the feeling; now it is His Word.  
Once His gifts I wanted; now the Giver own;  
Once I sought for healing; now *himself* alone.”<sup>1</sup>

## The Believer’s Paradox

A believer in Christ has conflict in his soul. The old Adam does not die without a terrible struggle. “*The things I would do, I do not; and the things I would not do, I do,*” said Paul.

What a paradox the believer is: joyful, but in continual heaviness; full, but oh so empty; rich, but less than the least of all.

## The Wrath of Man

*“Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee; the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain”*

Psalm 76:10

Let the heathen rage; let the atheist boast; let the profane swear. All that they do and say shall redound to the glory of God, and they can do no more than God allows them to do. Wicked men crucified the Lord in their wrath, but they did what God determined before to be done. Persecutors mock and ridicule the Lord’s people, causing them great anguish and discomfort; but these trials are used of God to strengthen our faith, wean us from the this world, and make us more like Christ.

The wrath, opposition, and persecution of wicked rebels, which God is not pleased to use for His glory or our good, *he will restrain!*

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<sup>1</sup> Simpson. A.B. *Himself*. 1891.

## The Nature of Faith

*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”*

Romans 10:10.

The Apostle Paul explains the nature of faith in Romans 10:10. Faith does not lie in a bare mental assent to facts nor in a doctrinal position, but in a genuine *heart* work. It is believing Christ with the affections, the will, and the understanding. We receive not only the truth of Christ but Christ Himself.

## Rest

*“I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety.”*

Psalm 4:8

Better than bars and locks is the protection of our Lord. Armed men kept the bed of Solomon; but we do not believe he slept more soundly than his father, David, whose bed was the hard ground, and who was hunted by evil men.

Note the word “*only*” which means that God alone was his keeper; and that though alone, without man’s help, he was in good keeping; for he was “alone with God”.

O Lord, give us calm repose on Thee that, like David, we may lie down in peace and sleep each night while we live and then joyfully lie down at that appointed time to sleep in death and rest in Christ.

The Seven Names of the Lord:

*Jehovah-jireh*: The Lord will provide.

*Jehovah-rapha*: The Lord that healeth.

*Jehovah-nissi*: The Lord our banner.

*Jehovah-shalom*: The Lord our peace.

*Jehovah-ra-ab*: The Lord my shepherd.

*Jehovah-tsidkenu*: The Lord our righteousness.

*Jehovah-shammah*: The Lord is present.

## Glory in the Cross of Christ

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. With a strong “*God forbid*”, Paul made a clean sweep of all these grounds for boasting and declared, “*I will glory only in the cross of Christ.*”

You know without my telling you that he referred not to a tree, or a necklace, or a symbol on a church steeple, but to the great atonement of our Lord – to the substitutionary, vicarious suffering of Christ – to the glorious gospel which came from the cross.

I wish today’s religion would *totally abandon* the superstitious use of crosses and begin again to preach the true cross of Christ – the gospel of His glory!

# Read the Scriptures with Your Eyes Open

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 this seems 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. *“To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins”* (Acts 10:43).

## To Be Called A Christian

We are *crucified* with Christ, *buried* with Him in baptism, *walk* with Him in the light of the Scriptures, *at his feet* in humility, *assembled* with His people in worship and praise, *bear* His reproach, *forgive* as He forgave, *love* as He loved, and *wait* for His return.

In other words, confessing Christ before men is to be so closely associated with Christ that one is called in truth by others *a christian!*

## Run the Race Set Before You

The Apostle Paul declared in Philippians 3:13-14, *“Brethren, I don’t claim to have arrived at perfection in doctrine, spirit, or deed. I am not yet all that Christ would have me to be. I am not all that I would like to be, nor even all that I ought to be. Thank God, however, I am not what I used to be. One thing I do; I forget what lies behind me – my struggles and attempts at self-righteousness in false religion, my experiences and lessons learned in spiritual*

*infancy, my works and labors since conversion, and even my recent growth. Now I reach forth for present and future blessings and revelations of His grace.”*

A runner in a race does not look behind to see how far he has come nor look about to see if he is outrunning others; but he is concerned to cross the line, finish the race, and obtain the prize – the incorruptible crown of life.

## **The Way of the Believer**

It is more profitable and enjoyable to love than to hate, to forgive than to hold a grudge, to smile than to quarrel, to behave kindly than to act ugly. The way of the transgressor is hard, not the way of the believer.

## **Nothing to Fear**

If you truly love, reverence, and fear the Lord God, you have nothing else to fear!

# Be Not Unequally Yoked with Unbelievers

*“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”*

II Corinthians 6:14

This metaphor is taken from horses or oxen which, being joined together by a common yoke, must walk and pull together in the same direction and with the same goal or have serious problems. Believers and unbelievers do not have the same principles, natures, nor goals. They cannot walk together in harmony because they are not agreed on the vital issues of life, sin, salvation, God’s glory, and the gospel (Amos 3:3).

Therefore, the believer is unwise who marries an unbeliever, who seeks social fellowship and companionship with unbelievers, or who attempts to worship or conduct religious projects with unbelievers. This is not to be understood as forbidding any contact with unbelievers in civil society, conversation, or vocation and trade. If that were true, the believer would have to leave the world. Also, God put us in the world as salt and light (Mt. 5:13-16) to witness to all men and to be an example of His grace, even to those who despise His name.

But to seek an unnecessary alliance and partnership with one who does not know nor love our Master is foolish; for what fellowship, companionship, and agreement can righteousness have with unrighteousness? What an absurdity to think of joining together for comfortable communion darkness and light, or fire and water!

## Our True Selves

Your attitude and personality in the house of the Lord and around believers is no indication at all of the presence of grace and faith in your soul. But rather your attitude and personality in your own house and toward your own family reveal your true self. 1 Timothy 5:8 says, *“But if any provide not for his own and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.”*

This does not only apply to food and clothing, but to love, understanding, kindness, and spiritual example. Actually, I had much rather have the approval and testimony of those with whom I live, for they see me and hear me in unguarded and unfeigned moments.

## Salvation is of the Lord

If salvation were partly of God and partly of man, it would be like a house built partly on rock and partly on sand. The whole structure would soon fall. If our dependence were upon the Lord Jesus in a measure and on our own works to some degree, it would be a tower that would never reach the sky, doomed to failure from the start.

Oh to know the full meaning of the words, *“Salvation is of the Lord.”* Taught by the Spirit, through the Word, in heart and experience is the only way to learn the full meaning of *“Salvation is of the Lord”*.

A man will lie broken at the foot of a cliff, every bone dislocated by the fall, and yet still hope to save himself. Piles of sin, mountains of transgressions, and a landslide of iniquity may bury a man, but he will cling to the hope that he will finally dig his way out.

You may crush human nature and grind it to powder, but every particle of dust will reek with pride and self-righteousness. Only the Holy Spirit can make a man surrender, throw up his hands in helplessness, and cry, *“SALVATION IS OF THE LORD!”*

## Be Content and Be Confident

Someone wrote that Martin Luther's strength and confidence lay in the fact that he believed so strongly that the ministry in which he was engaged was not his own but the Lord's. He often prayed, "Lord, this is your cause, not mine."

What would this persuasion do for you and me? Is not most of our depression and unhappiness caused by the desire to *see* more than we are seeing, *do* more than we are doing, *have* more than we have, and to *be* what we are not?

If this is *the Lord's cause and not mine*, then I ought to be content to serve diligently where He has placed me, with the gifts He has given me, doing all that I find to do, and rejoicing in His love. "*Where two or three are met in my name.*" Enoch walked with God in a day few did. Paul rejoiced in the Lord when all had forsaken him except Luke.

*"Wherefore lift up the hang that hand down, and the feeble knees"* (Heb. 12:12). "*The Lord God omnipotent reigneth*" (Rev. 19:6) "*When the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive tree shall fail, and the fields yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; YET I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation*" (Hab. 3:17-18).

## The Fear of the Lord

One fire puts out another. Nothing so effectively kills the fear of man as a genuine abundance of the *fear of the Lord*! When the fear of men would tempt a servant of God to compromise or take the offense from the cross, the fear of the Lord gives him *even greater boldness*.

## Lovest Thou Me?

This is the point on which a man's relationship with God hinges. As simple as the question may sound, it is most searching. If a man has no love for Christ, he has no faith. If a man truly loves Christ, all is right; if not, all is wrong.

## A Heart Work

Worship, praise, prayer, and faith are all *heart work*, not simply participating in ceremonies, rituals of religion, and the chanting of fundamental words and facts. *“My son, give me thine HEART.”* *“The sacrifices of God are a BROKEN HEART and a contrite spirit.”*

## Genuine Love

A genuine love for others is an evidence of redemption. It is not the *cause* but the *sign*, for no one sincerely loves others except he is regenerated by the Spirit of God. The love of natural men is self-love. I verily believe that the two strongest evidence of true salvation are love and perseverance in faith. Oh, for a heart to love and a faith that will not fail.

“I want to live as one who knows  
The fellowship of His love;  
With depths of tenderness declare  
The mercy which reigns above.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Smith, Charitie Lees. *Lord, I Desire*. Our Own Hymnbook, No. 653. Compiled by Charles Spurgeon. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1862.

## True Profession

*“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”*

1 John 3:18

The thing that troubles me most about the validity of our profession of Christ is that we talk, preach, and sing of love, mercy, and forgiveness. But then, when the opportunity comes for us to love the unlovely, forgive the offender, and bind up the wounded heart, we join the circle of Pharisees, clutching our stones, ready to wound and maim.

A profession that does not produce is a false profession.

## Judge Not By Outward Appearance

Mr. Spurgeon once said, “Never be guilty of judging a man’s spiritual state by his earthly condition!” It may be that the children of God will be called upon to suffer greatly while the wicked prosper in all things.

David deals with this in Psalm 73. So if you and I imagine that because a man is poor, or in bad health, or in great sorrow that he is being punished by God for sin, more often than not we will condemn the true believer and praise the hypocrite.

## Precious

*“Unto you that believe, He is precious”*

1 Peter 2:7

Believers receive Christ, rejoice in Christ, and to them He is precious. His obedience is our righteousness. His blood is our atonement. His prayers are our intercession. His reign is our glory. His coming is our hope! Christ is all and in all!

## My People Pray For Me

On a visit to France, Mr. Spurgeon met an American minister who said, “I have long wished to meet you, Mr. Spurgeon, and to ask you one question. Would you be good enough to give me the secret of your great success?” After a moment’s pause, Spurgeon replied, “*My people pray for me!*”

## Good Works

There is a contention always going on about the doctrine of good works; and, instead of taking one side or the other, we shall try to see whether there really is anything to quarrel over if we keep to the Scriptures.

We insist, with all our might, that salvation is *“not of works, lest any man should boast.”* But, on the other hand, we freely admit and earnestly teach that *“without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”* Where there are no good works, there is no indwelling of the Spirit of God. That faith which does not produce obedience, good works, and genuine love is not saving faith. Good works must and will be in the believer. They are *not the root*, but *the fruit* of God’s salvation.

They are not the *way* of the believer's salvation; they are his *walk* in the way of salvation.

The desire of men created anew in Christ is to be rid of all sin. We do sin, but we do not love sin. Sin gets power over us sometimes to our sorrow, yet it shall not have dominion over us; for we are not under the law, but under grace.

The old nature goes after the flesh, for it is fleshly; but the new nature truly seeks the things of God, for it is spiritual. If you have been created anew, you have been created *unto good works*. If this is not so with us, then our religion is a mere pretense.

## Real Conversion

Long ago men accused Jesus Christ of revolution and blasphemy and *put him on a cross*. Today's religionists, while claiming to believe in His Word, have *put him in a sanctuary*. There, amid soft music or hearty singing, the chant of the liturgy or shouts of amen, He can be talked about and worshipped without interfering with their lives. Souls can be "saved" without disturbing the other relationships, partnerships, and patterns they have established.

Those who put Him on the cross, hoping to be done with His judgments and demands for their complete submission to His Lordship, were no more deceived than those who have tried to relegate Him to church buildings or the worship of Him to a Sabbath day.

Real conversion cannot mean anything other than the dedication and committal of the total self to the Lord Jesus Christ. Today's presumption is that God exists to serve and provide for us, whereas Scriptures indicate that our chief end in life is to glorify God!

Do not come to worship Him in here if you do not walk with Him out there!

## Scriptures Alone, Grace Alone, Christ Alone

It's amazing how history repeats itself! We seem to go around in a circle. During the days of the Reformation, when superstition, tradition, and the human will reigned in religion, the reformers waged their battle for the glory of God and the true gospel on a foundation with three critical points.

- 1.) *The scriptures alone.* "Let God be true and every man a liar." We bow to the Word apart from visions, revelations, or opinions of men.
- 2.) *Grace alone.* Salvation only by free, sovereign, and full grace apart from law, works, or any other contribution of any sort.
- 3.) *Christ alone.* "By Himself purged our sins." His person and work effectually, totally, and eternally redeemed His elect.

This is where the battle rages *today* in America, where fundamentalism with its emotion, easy believism, freewill, and super programs seem to have captured the people. It's back to this three-fold foundation for every true preacher.

## The Three R's

I believe that every sermon we preach should contain the *three R's* – *Ruin* by the fall, *Redemption* by the blood of Christ, and *Regeneration* by the Holy Spirit. If our hearers learn these in their hearts, they will not go far wrong on other matters; but, if they have not learned these, it will matter very little what else they learn.

## Two Truths

It is true that Christ alone is our salvation and sanctification; it is equally true that where the Spirit of Christ dwells, the fruit of the Spirit will be manifested.

### How Can Man be Just With God?

The great and important question for you and me always has been and is now, “How can man be just with God?” I do not deny an interest in the mysteries of providence and the matters of prophecy, but the most important matter to me at all times (and it increases as I grow older and approach the Day of Judgement) is, “How can I stand before God justified and accepted?” Woe to the man who shall be weighed and found wanting! *“If I justify myself,”* Job declares, *“my mouth would condemn me.”* If I say that I am without sin and holy enough for God’s fellowship, I would be a liar and make God a liar!

But Paul declares, *“It is God that justifieth.”* He can, by the substitution and satisfaction of His Son, make the unjust, just, and the unclean, clean. He can cover us with a perfect robe of righteousness so that we are as holy and as pure as the Redeemer Himself. And the important thing is that God can justify us in a way that is consistent with His holiness, glorifying to His mercy, honoring to His law, and which completely satisfies His justice.

As the first Adam stood before God as the representative and federal head of the whole human race and it was by his sin that guilt and sin were both imputed and imparted to us, so God in grace sent Christ, the second Adam, the Lord Jesus, to stand in our stead that we might in and through and by Him have imputed and imparted to us a perfect righteousness. *“By the disobedience of one many became sinner, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”*

This is the good news to the guilty and good tidings of great joy to the helpless. The great writer and preacher, Isaac Watts, declared on

his deathbed, “I bless God that His promises are so plain and simple that I do not need great wisdom to grasp them. My hope is simply in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, my Lord.”

## **Take Comfort in the Sovereignty of God**

There is nothing more comforting to believers than God’s sovereignty over all things. Under the most adverse circumstances and in the most severe trials, we believe that God has ordained our afflictions, that God overrules them, and that God will sanctify them for our good and His glory.

There is nothing for which we ought to contend more earnestly than the truth of God’s rule and reign over all things, all creatures, and all their actions. The throne of God, His right to sit on that throne, and His right to do with His own what He will is what we believe and what we preach.

Let us be accused of over-emphasizing the majesty and power of the living God, but never let it be said that we underestimate His glory.

## **Five Words to Workers**

Here are five words of counsel and instructions for those who work for other people and firms:

1.) Be submissive and obedient to your employer, whether he is a believer or an unbeliever. You are hired and paid 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, however, are a disgrace to the gospel.

3.) Don't talk back or contradict. Do not reply to orders in either a sarcastic, saucy, or grumbling manner. The boss may not always be right, but he is always the boss!

4.) Do not steal from your firm either time, money, or things which 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 loyal, reliable, and faithful. It is neither loyal nor faithful 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 loyal employee, you are able to adorn the gospel you believe and make that gospel attractive to others as they see you walk worthy of it.

## You Will Not

*"You will not come to me, that you might have life"*

John 5:40

It was not lack of witnesses, of evidence, nor of proof of His deity and person which kept these Jews from believing on and coming to Christ, but *perversity of will!* It was because (like all natural men) they had fallen, corrupt, and depraved wills.

Men are *unwilling* to come to Christ. They are unwilling to own their sins, unwilling to admit their inability, unwilling to seek God's mercy, and unwilling to cast themselves on Christ. But His people *shall be made willing* in the day of His power!

Thank God for His sovereign will and saving power in Christ! All who come to Christ come willingly.

## The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ

How complex and mysterious is the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah calls Him a *child* and a *counselor*. In the same breath he calls Him a *son*, he calls Him the *everlasting father*. He who is an *infant* is the *infinite God*. The *man of sorrows* is the *mighty God, despised of men*, yet He is *wonderful*. His garments are rolled in blood, but He is the *prince of peace*. How these words remind me that He is not discovered by research and reason but by revelation! He said to Peter, "*Flesh and blood hath not revealed the knowledge of my glory to you, but the Father has revealed it.*"

There is no seeing Christ nor understanding Christ except in *his own light*. He is the door, but he openeth and no man shutteth. He is the lesson, but He is also the teacher. He is the destination, but he is the Way. He is the object of faith, but He is also the author of faith. He is that which is to be seen and the light by which we see. "*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgements and His ways past finding out*" (Rom. 11:33). How empty are the words "the simple plan of salvation" in the light of this complex and mysterious person, Jesus Christ.

O, Spirit of God, sanctify our carnal thoughts and illuminate our dark understanding. Give us that saving knowledge of Him who enables God to be just and Justifier, who is both the wisdom and the power of God.

# Love

*“We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death”*

1 John 3:14

If there is anything better than being loved, it is to love; for this is the mark of discipleship, the evidence of regeneration, and the bond of perfection. It is the nature of God, for *God is love*. It is the old, the new, the great commandment, and all the commandments in one word – love!

It is the first fruit of the Spirit; it is the foundation of all other graces. And of all that abides, it is the *“greatest of these”*. It casteth out fear, it covers a multitude of sins, it brought Christ to earth to be our redeemer.

Love sees what no eye sees, hears what no ear hears, and understands that which only love can teach. It can't be defined, only experienced. It can't be destroyed as long as God lives. It can't be developed; it is the gift of God.

It's presence is evidence of God's presence, and its absence is evidence of God's absence; for *“he that loveth not knoweth not God”*. The apostle said, *“Make love your aim”* (1 Cor. 14:1).

## Earthen Vessels

*“We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us”*

2 Corinthians 4:7

God employs weak instruments to make manifest His mighty power and grace. In this, as in everything else, the Lord’s thoughts and ways are different from ours.

We would try to do His work with the great, the influential, the talented, and the strong. *But God* used a shepherd lad to conquer the mighty Goliath. He rejected Moses (the rich and mighty) and used Moses (the humble and poor) to deliver Israel. He chose a peasant woman, not a princess, to be the mother of the Saviour. The mighty revival in Samaria was started by a converted harlot. The apostles were fishermen, not scholars.

Why? A simple answer! That the glory, the praise, and the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. Also that *the faith* of our hearers may be *in God*, not in us!

## Repentance toward God – Faith in Christ

Repentance is the hand releasing my idols; faith is an empty hand that reaches out to Christ for His gift of grace.

Repentance is godly sorrow over sin; faith receives a full pardon from Christ.

Repentance cries, *“God be merciful to me a sinner”*; faith embraces the sinner’s Saviour.

Repentance is a genuine hatred for the pollution of sin; faith is seeking cleansing in Christ.

Repentance is the leper covering his mouth and crying, "*Unclean, unclean!*" Faith is the leper coming to Christ and saying, "*Lord, if you will you can make me clean.*"

## Wisdom

The source of all wisdom is God. "*If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God...*" But let him ask in faith, being assured that this is really what he wants. No real seeker is sent away empty.

## Unwilling

*"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life"*

John 5:40

It was not lack of *evidence* or *witnesses* that kept these Jews from coming to Christ, believing on Him, and receiving Him as Lord and Saviour. There was evidence enough in Him and in His words and acts. "*No man spake like this man.*" "*No man could do these miracles except God be with him.*"

There were *witnesses* enough in John the Baptist, the Father Himself, the works, and the prophets of old! It was not lack of evidence or witnesses but *their fallen and perverse wills* which kept them from seeing and believing! *and it is so today!*

The Lord Jesus is able and willing to receive and redeem all who come to Him, but men by nature are unwilling to come to Him that they might have life. Why is this?

1.) It is because they are blind to the absolute holiness and justice of God. He will in no wise clear the guilty. Christ is the only way God can be just and Justifier (Rom. 3:19-26).

2.) It is because they are blind to their sins and have no sense of their deep and desperate need of a mediator, a sin-offering, and an atonement. *“No man cometh to the Father but by me”,* for *“by Him we have now received the atonement”* (Rom. 5:11).

3.) It is because the carnal mind is enmity against God, and *Jesus Christ is God!* (Jn. 10:30).

## **My Only Hope**

I will tell you this about myself – my sole hope for resurrection in the likeness of Christ and eternal glory lies only in the full atonement Christ made for the ungodly. On this I firmly rest, and I have not the faintest hope in anyone or anything else.

You and I are born of the same father, guilty of the same crimes, and burdened down with the same flesh. Neither of us has anything of his own to plead, nor does the best man who ever lived.

We shall all be saved by the same Saviour or perish in our sins.

## **Calvinism**

I know that we are not “Calvinists” in the sense that we are followers of John Calvin or, for that matter, any man. But I am not ashamed to be identified with faithful men of the past who preached and boldly contended for the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace. We must not be ashamed of our pedigree. The old truth that Spurgeon preached, that Whitefield preached, that Calvin

preached, that Paul preached is the truth that I must preach today or be false to my conscience and my God.

Mr. Spurgeon once said, “The primary need of the church is not simply more evangelism nor even more holiness (in the first place) but a return to the full truth of the gospel of God’s free grace”, which, for convenience, he was prepared to name “Calvinism”. I cannot *shape* the truth in order to get along with preachers and organizations which do not believe it. I cannot take the rough edges off nor the offence from such doctrines as the fall, election, and effectual atonement. Most preachers (if they will but admit it) are afraid for their popularity, jobs, and current situations; therefore, they spend their time *explaining* the Word of God in a way that will not offend those who do not believe the real gospel of God’s immutable, sovereign grace!

Someone once said, “You need not protect, defend, or make excuses for a *lion* – turn him loose!” The gospel is the *power* of God – preach it plainly, openly, boldly, and leave the results to the Lord of heaven and earth!

## True Faith

Faith without works of obedience is no more than the faith of devils who are damned. “*You believe there is one God; you do well*” for there is but one God, proved by the light of nature, creation, providence, and Scriptures. But the devils also have this same historical faith and knowledge.

True saving faith produces works of obedience, love, and grace. Faith which has no works is *dead faith*, and works which are not the results of true faith are *dead works*! Good works are second acts necessarily flowing from the life of faith.

Good works are not infallible proof of genuine faith; but the absence of works is certain proof of *the absence of faith*.

# Reconciliation

*“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself”*

2 Corinthians 5:19

This phrase declares the ministry of reconciliation which God has given to faithful preachers. It declares the *author, means, subjects, and consequences* of that work. In the person of His dear Son, God was actually providing Himself a lamb, a ransom, and an atonement. He did not charge our sins to us, but to Christ, having made Christ to be sin for us.

The word “world” does not mean that Jesus Christ effectually bore the sins of every son of Adam and reconciled every person to God by His death. If this be the case, no one would be finally lost. He reconciled the “world” in the sense that He actually redeemed a people out of every kindred, nation, and tongue, not of the Jews only!

John Owen said, “If Christ died for *all* of the sins of *all* men, then *all* men would be saved; if Christ died for *some* of the sins of *all* men, then *no one* would be saved; but in that He died for *all* of the sins of *some* men, then some will truly be saved.”<sup>3</sup>

This ministry of reconciliation, substitution, and satisfaction has been committed to faithful preachers, and we will preach it, and we dare not preach any other message. Inasmuch as Christ is our righteousness God does not call upon us to produce a righteousness, but to receive His perfect righteousness by faith. Inasmuch as Christ is our surety and substitute, God will not require satisfaction from us but accepts us *in the Beloved*.

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<sup>3</sup> Owen, John. *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. London: 1647.

## The Love of Christ

A believer lay dangerously ill. He had lived and labored faithfully in the same church for many years. His friends gathered at his home to pray for him. As one of the men prayed, he was heard to say, “Lord, Thou knowest how he loved Thee.”

The sick man opened his eyes and said, “Please do not pray like that. When Mary and Martha sent for Christ to come to the aid of their brother, they did not say, ‘he who *loves thee* is sick’; but they said, ‘*he whom thou lovest* is sick’.”

It is not our love for Christ that removes fear and disease, but His love for us.

## Who Made You to Differ?

*“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith.”*

Romans 3:27

Someone may think that the truth of election leads to pride – to teach that we are the chosen people of God will puff a man up with pride! *Quite the contrary!* The truth of God’s sovereign grace in Christ is the very instrument which cuts out pride by the roots. It is written, *“Who maketh thee to differ from another” And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?”* (1 Cor. 4:7).

If you are a believer, look about you to those of your own family still without any knowledge of Christ, perhaps wrapped in religious tradition and darkness. Now, I ask you, *who made you to differ?* Look about your neighborhood and see drunkenness, profanity, drugs, and broken homes. Now, I ask you, *who made you to differ?* Are you by nature better than they? Or were you in heart and principle more

godly than they? Look into the prisons, or institutions, or upon nine-tenths of the world bound in poverty, superstition, and darkness and tell me *who made you to differ?*

How can a sinner saved by grace be proud? Look down to the realms of darkness and see the angels that fell, reserved in everlasting chains. Look at whole nations who, like the angels, have been passed by in God's wisdom and judgement and tell me *who made you to differ?* A proud believer would be totally inconsistent with free grace!

“’Tis not that I did choose Thee;  
For Lord, that could not be;  
This heart would *still* refuse Thee,  
But Thou hast chosen me.”<sup>4</sup>

## The Effects of Trials

Have you ever noticed how believers who have been *severely* tried under the hand of God become more *cautious* and *humble*? They do not speak quite so fast as they used to speak; they do not have a ready solution for every problem; they do not boast of what they *have* done, *will* do, or *would* do under certain circumstances; they are not quite so critical of others who fail; they have little to say about their own doings and much to say about the wonderful grace of our Lord.

Afflictions and trials have a way of *mellowing* believers and creating a certain character which cannot be mistaken or imitated. David wrote in Psalm 119:71, “*It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn...*”

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<sup>4</sup> Conder, Josiah. *'Tis Not That I Did Choose Thee*. The Congregational Hymn Book. London: 1836.

# Good News

*“Unto you is born a Saviour which is Christ, the Lord”*

Luke 2:11

This is the good news, that the Saviour born is none other than Christ the Lord. There is no good news if He is not the Lord God. It is not good news that a great prophet is born. Moses was a great prophet, but he is dead. It is not good news that another priest is born. Aaron was a great high priest, but others have taken his place by reason of his death. It is not good news that a good king is born. David was a good king, but he sleeps even as do the wicked kings.

But if you tell me that the one born in Bethlehem is none other than the eternal God who is *Prophet, Priest, and King* – that is good news! He ever lives to make intercession. He eternally reigns with all authority. He will never leave nor forsake me. If the God-man is my Saviour, *that is good news!*

## Enquire in His Temple

A Christian is one who makes enquiries of his God. David said, *“One thing have I desired, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple.”*

When believers come to public worship, they come to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple.

## A Change – But Not *The* Change

I believe there are many people who think that they have been converted because of certain changes which they have made or which have been made (for various reasons) in their lives. Sometimes there are changes which are beneficial to everyone, but still it is not being born again or being saved.

A man may change from a drunkard to a sober man, and that is good; but it will not make him acceptable in God's sight. A man may change from being a thief to being honest, and that is good; but it will not save him. A man may learn good and wholesome doctrine, attend the house of worship, and contribute talents and money to helping the ministry; but that will not save him either.

Salvation is not washing the skin; it is the washing of regeneration by the Spirit and by the blood of Christ. Not only is the *walk* different, but the heart is different. Not only are the *words* different, but the spirit and attitude are different.

There is a change wrought in a sinner when he meets the Master in saving faith, but it is *first of all an inward change* which brings an outward change. This order cannot be reversed! There may be outward changes which never reach the heart; but *without fail*, if there is a change in heart, it will bring forth an outward conformity to godliness.

## The Grace of Love

When we talk about true, heart love, we are speaking of the *grace of love* which, like faith, is the gift of God. We are born loving ourselves, but not others. We are born with hatred for God. "*The natural mind is enmity toward God.*"

The grace of love comes only with the new birth. Then this grace of love gives us the spirit or attitude of love which is included in the

fruit of the Spirit. *“Everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God”* (1 Jn. 4:7).

Then the spirit of love leads to works or labors of love. We love ourselves by nature; therefore, we make ourselves happy, comfortable, and content. When we are given the grace of love, we begin to think of others and seek to make them happy, comfortable, and content.

## Terms of Surrender

I cannot know Christ through another man’s mind. I cannot love Him with another man’s heart. I cannot believe on Him with another man’s faith. I cannot hear Him with another’s ears nor see Him with another’s eyes!

I pray that He will reveal Himself to me, that He will come and dwell with me, and that Christ may be formed in me! It is not enough that I know of His historical life, nor that I give mental agreement to His doctrines, nor that I approve of His laws. I must gain an interest in Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, but His.

The fact is, I no longer have my own life; it is His. I am not my own master; He is my Master. God’s terms of surrender are unconditional!

## Love One Another

*“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you”*

John 15:12

Our Lord commands us to love one another as He loves us. Love is a genuine heart attitude which must be expressed. It cannot co-exist with selfishness, pride, and hard feelings. In the degree that love prevails, *these things are destroyed!*

*“Love worketh no ill to his neighbor”* (Rom. 13:10). If evil is said or done, it is because love is not present in sufficient force. Genuine love knows no bounds and has no limit – *“as I have loved you.”*

If occasion requires it, we are to be ready to lay down our lives for one another (Jn. 15:13). *This love* is only by His grace and is shed abroad in the heart by His Spirit. *This love* is evidence that we are His disciples.

## Keep the Faith

We have entered a race, and the prize goes to those who finish – to those who keep the faith. There will be difficult times and perhaps heavy trials. We may proceed rapidly or slowly, we may stumble and fall; but, looking to Christ, we continue in the faith. *“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”*

## Humble Yourself

*“Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not; for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh.”*

Jeremiah 45:5

If our Lord became poor, why should not we, for His glory, be willing to be poor? If He made Himself of no reputation, why should we worry about ours? If He was willing to be a servant, why should not we be servants?

What poor creatures we are at our best! If God were to permit us to be doormats to the church, it would be too high an honor for us. What place we serve or what becomes of us does not matter, so long as His purpose is served and His name glorified.

## The Greatest of These

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

I Corinthians 13:13

If I could speak with the languages of every nation on earth and express myself as angels do, yet have not that true root of love for others which flows from a true love for Christ, I only make an irritating noise with my mouth, which will be of no use to me nor to others.

If I had the gift of prophecy, whereby I could preach the mysteries of Scripture and even foretell the purpose of God in reference to the future; and, though I had a vast knowledge of the most sublime and hidden things and a faith to work miracles, if I have not this *brotherly love*, I am nothing! I may be great in the eyes of men; but, before God, I am nothing.

*“If I give away my possessions to feed the poor...”* Why would a man do this if he did not love the poor? He might, like Ananias or the Pharisees, do it for self-praise and self-righteous purposes. *“If I give my body to be burned”*, or die as a martyr for the cause of orthodoxy and religion, *“it will profit me nothing”*.

No actions, no human sacrifices, and no human sufferings are sufficient to entitle any soul to heaven. It is Christ who saves; and, if I have not that love for Christ which produces a love for others, all of these gifts, offices, and efforts are useless. Love is so essential that, if a man has everything else and has not love, he is nothing.

Love is not the prerogative of a few; it must be the possession of *all*.

## When I am Weak

Our strength in the flesh is sure to be our weakness in the spirit. *“It is not by might nor power but BY MY SPIRIT,”* saith the Lord. I do not mean that brilliant men cannot preach, but that they cannot preach as brilliant men. I am not saying that gifted financiers and able businessmen cannot lead God’s church, but that they cannot lead on the basis of their natural gifts.

God will lay aside Saul’s sword and use David’s sling. If I have any great ability or natural talent, let me learn to pour contempt upon it and minister the Word as a dying man to dying men. *“We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us”* (2 Cor. 4:7).

I’m sure that God can do without those who think themselves to be qualified or necessary. *“When I am weak THEN I am strong.”*

## Value All Things in the Light of Eternity

Let us value nothing on this earth any more than we shall value it in eternity. We need to learn to look upon everything this world has to offer in the light of death, judgement, and eternity. Everything that we see, touch, and possess shall pass away. All fleshly relationships will be dissolved; the greatest house shall fall; the finest clothes shall rot and decay; the healthiest body will die. But he that doeth the will of God shall abide forever.

“Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day;  
Earth’s joys grow dim; its glories pass away.  
Change and decay in all around I see;  
Oh, Thou that changes not, abide with me.”<sup>5</sup>

## Err on the Side of Simplicity

Most people to whom we preach are totally ignorant of the whole system of grace and salvation. It is better to suppose *too little* knowledge and preach the simplicity of Christ than to suppose *too much* knowledge and allow people to perish without hearing the way of life and trusting a false profession.

## The Crown Rights of King Jesus

God hath made Jesus of Nazareth, whom we crucified, to be both Lord and Christ. God hath appointed Him *Lord* whether I recognize it or not. He is no misfit here. He deserves to be Lord, for He has both perfect holiness and perfect humility. *“Equal with God, yet He hath made Himself of no reputation, wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name.”*

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<sup>5</sup> Monk, William Henry. *Abide With Me*. 1847

My friend, the command of God is for us to bow to the crown rights of Jesus Christ. He delights to show mercy. He had rather save you than to damn you, but Christ will have no rival for His glory. Every kingdom has to have a king; and, in God's kingdom, *it is King Jesus!*

Only one person has the right to rule over you, the church, and the world. He purchased that right at Calvary!

## Undivided

Christ, our Lord, is presented in the gospel as *undivided* in His offices. He is Prophet, Priest, and King. The Father will not permit Him to be divided. Some would have Him as Saviour but not as Sovereign. Some would have His teaching but not His atonement. Some would enjoy the crown but not the cross.

My friend, it will be the complete Christ or no Christ. The gospel holds out no hope to the man who will not hear Him, be cleansed by His blood, and bow to Him as Lord.

## Behold the Lamb of God

The Jews were looking for Messiah to come as a great *prophet* or a great *king*. They understood nothing of a "Saviour-Priest", of a "Lamb of God". You would think that these priests and Levites who ministered about the temple and the sacrifices would have inquired about *the sacrifice*; but they apparently had no sense of sin – they were Abraham's seed.

They would have welcomed Messiah *on the throne*, but not *on the altar*.

1.) In Genesis 4:4, we have the Lamb *typified*.

- 2.) In Genesis 22:8, we have the Lamb Promised.
- 3.) In Exodus 12:5-7, we have the Lamb *slain and the blood applied*.
- 4.) In Isaiah 53:1-7, we have the Lamb *personified – a man!*
- 5.) In John 1:29, we have the Lamb *identified*.
- 6.) In Revelation 5:6 & 13, we have the Lamb *magnified and glorified*.

## Some Characteristics of the People of God

The people of God are a *faithful* people. They are faithful to the Lord, to the gospel, to the church, and to their pastors.

The people of God are a *grateful* people. While all honor and praise for all things is to be first given to the Lord, yet it is Christ-like and commendable to be grateful FOR one another and TO one another for every labor of love.

The people of God are an *affectionate* people. Some ridicule and criticism has been cast on a show of genuine affection between believers; yet it was practiced by the early churches, to whom Paul four times says, “*Greet one another with a holy kiss.*” He calls it a holy kiss as distinguished from that which is lustful and that which is common among relatives.

Believers are more to one another than just holders of common doctrine. They are brethren in the family of God, and they sincerely love one another with a deeper affection than natural men can know. If one is a stranger to this Christian love, he may well be a stranger to the Saviour’s love; for Christ said, “*Love one another as I have loved you.*”

## Christ, Our First Love

Man's *affections* may be stirred by what he sees, man's *intelligence* may be informed by what he hears, and man's *conscience* may be convicted by what he feels; but to know Christ in a saving relationship, God must give him a *new heart*.

Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus is a heart work, whereby we are brought not only to believe God and to trust Christ, but to genuinely *love him* – to love Him for Himself and to love Him above all others.

It is not that the believer has no struggle with the flesh and the world – he does. But he has a *first love* – Christ! Those which would vie for his affection and attention must settle for a lesser place, for Christ has won his heart.

## Preach the Gospel No Matter What

“Scarcely a Baptist minister of standing will own me,” Spurgeon wrote in a letter to a friend. And in another letter he commented that preachers of his day “are afraid of real *gospel* Calvinism”. The eminent Thomas Binney, after hearing a sermon in which Spurgeon preached against freewill and Arminianism, declared, “I never heard such things in my life before.”

## Good Works Reveal True Faith

Do not be deceived by false preachers and wicked persons who preach that it does not matter how a person lives provided he believes in Jesus Christ, or that knowledge of theology is sufficient without obedience to Christ in conduct. This is not true! One cannot separate faith and conduct. As a tree is known by its fruit, so

a righteous man is known by his works. Good fruit does not make a tree good but *shows* it to be good; so good works do not make us righteous (only Christ can do that), but good works reveal true faith in Jesus Christ.

A church member who practices sin and disobedience to the commandments of Christ is not of God, but takes his character from the evil one. He imitates Satan, not Christ. Christ came not only to deliver us from the penalty of sin but also from the power and practice of sin.

He that is regenerated by the Spirit of God, in whom Christ is formed, who is a new creature in Christ, does not make sin his practice and the course of his life. He is not without the motions of sin within nor free from sinful thoughts, words, and even sinful deeds; but he does not give himself up to sin, excuse it, justify it, nor continue therein! Sin, even in thought, is distasteful and hateful to one who loves Christ and desires to be like Him.

“O to be like Thee! blessed Redeemer;  
This is my constant longing and prayer;  
Gladly I’ll forfeit all of earth’s treasures,  
Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear.

O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee!  
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art;  
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness;  
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.”<sup>6</sup>

## Works Without Faith and Faith Without Works

Faith that has no works is a dead, useless, false faith! Works without faith are dead works. Good works are second acts, necessarily flowing from a life of faith in Christ. By these works and labors of

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<sup>6</sup> Chisholm, Thomas Obediah. *O To Be Like Thee*. 1897.

love, there is clear evidence that faith is alive and active. Good works are not infallible proof of genuine faith, but the *absence* of good works is certain proof of the absence of faith.

## Living Water

You know that there are some who preach a salvation that does not save. They teach that one may be a child of God today and lost again tomorrow. That is like the water in Jacob's well; *"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again."* But Christ's salvation is of a very different kind; *"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I SHALL GIVE HIM shall never thirst."*

## The Wisdom That is From Above

*"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy"*

James 3:17

You can be sure that when our attitudes and words create strife, confusion, and division, it is not the wisdom of God. Where wise men and women worship, there is love, peace, and unity.

The wisdom which is from God is *pure*! When the heart entertains pure and good thoughts of others, the mouth speaks accordingly.

It is *peaceable*. *"If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men."* Men who desire peace, speak peacefully.

It is *gentle*, mild, courteous, and patient. To contend for truth is not to be harsh and cruel as some suppose. Gentleness is the fruit of the Spirit, an attribute of Christ and also of His servants.

It is *easy to be entreated* or willing to listen to any word of wisdom, reason, and explanation; and it is quick to forgive. A forgiving heart is not a sign of weakness but of wisdom.

It is *full of mercy and good fruits*. Wisdom knows that God makes men to differ. He makes rich and poor, strong and weak. So there is always the desire to share what God has given with those who have less.

It is *without partiality*. Wisdom does not judge by outward appearance, skin color, or power to reimburse. It is no respecter of men's persons, but reaches out to all.

It is *without hypocrisy*. True spiritual wisdom in Christ is straightforward, open-faced, and genuine. How can anyone be so foolish as to play the game of religion before God, who searches and knows the heart?

*"Keep thine heart, for out of it are the issues of life."*

## I Was Glad

*"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord"*

Psalm 122:1

I was glad that I had a *desire* to go, that I had the *strength* to go, that I *understood* the words spoken there, that I *loved* the people assembled there, that I, the chief of sinners, *should be permitted* to come into His presence. *"Bless the Lord, O my soul!"*

## A New Nature

The person who says, “I am saved by grace alone and it does not matter how I talk, walk, or conduct my life,” is a fool and neither understands nor loves the grace of God. Our union with the Lord Jesus not only justifies and sanctifies us before the law of God and the court of heaven, but that same regenerating union implants within and imparts unto us *a new nature* which delights in the principles and actions of holiness.

One cannot separate the blessings of Christ from the indwelling presence of Christ. *“He that LOVETH not KNOWETH not!”* Learning the doctrine will not produce a new creature, but “learning Christ” will!

## To Be Like Christ

My determined purpose, my greatest desire, my soul and heart’s sincere hope is three-fold:

1.) *“That I may win Christ and be found in Him;”* not trusting nor having any self-achieved righteousness of my own, but possessing that genuine righteousness of God which comes through a living union with Christ by faith.

2.) *“That I may know Him.”* I do know Him, but I want progressively to become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him and the wonders of His person; that I may come to know the power flowing from His resurrection and the strength it gives to believers; that I may know and share His sufferings so as to be continually transformed into His likeness, daily dying to sin and the world.

3.) *“That I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.”* Certainly we want to have a part in that first resurrection in the Great Day; but perhaps Paul is referring here to a spiritual resurrection that lifts us out of the death, darkness, and corruption of this world.

The world, flesh, and all of this human life is death. In Christ there is real life, real love, real holiness. There is communion with God and perfect righteousness. This is what the believer wants. By whatever means it pleases God, I want to be like Christ in attitude, spirit, and heart.

## Go to Him

It is a scriptural fact that a guilty sinner can do nothing to justify himself before God. *Salvation is of the lord* – the free gift of His grace in and through Christ. We are righteous because of Christ's obedience, we are justified because Christ died, and we are accepted because Christ intercedes for us.

What shall we do if we are concerned about our sins? What shall we do if we desire to be redeemed, to know the Lord in saving grace? Shall we sit down and wait for the lightning to strike? Shall we fold our arms and wait to find out if we are among the favored flock?

This would not satisfy Bartimaeus, who would not be denied but cried out, "*Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!*" This was not the way of the woman of Canaan, whose daughter was sick, who was willing to take even the crumbs. She cried after Him until He spoke the words of peace.

Nor will it be the way of any man who is genuinely convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgement. He will make use of the means of grace. He must have Christ, and he will seek the Lord with all his heart. He will seek Christ in the Scriptures, in the sermon, in the assembly of God's people; and he will be willing to give up anything which prevents a living union with the Lord of Glory.

When the seeking sinner sees sin in its true light (heinous), when he sees the world as it is (vanity), when he sees Christ in His redemptive glory (eternal joy), he will be done with talking,

reasoning, rationalizing, and theorizing; and he will flee to Christ. As one old writer said, “Sink or swim, I go to Him.”<sup>7</sup>

## To Die in Your Sins

Christ said, “*If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.*” Better to die any death than to die in your sins. If you die in your sins, you will rise in your sins, you will stand at the judgment in your sins, and you will spend eternity in your sins! Better not to be born than to die in your sins.

## Faith Should Permeate All Aspects of Your Life

Mr. Spurgeon once said, “Sincere seekers after righteousness quietly dissolve their faith and godliness in their lives and sweeten all their common relationships therewith. The real believer flavors his ordinary life with grace, so that his wife, his children, his fellow-workmen, and his neighbors are the better for it.”<sup>8</sup>

A man’s faith ought to be what smell is to the rose and what light is to the sun. A good attitude and spirit toward all should be the outcome of indwelling grace. A division of the secular and the spiritual is fatal to both. In true grace they are forever united. “*Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh*” or “*as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.*”

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<sup>7</sup> Spurgeon, Charles H. *Autobiography: Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records*. Vol. 1. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1899.

<sup>8</sup> Spurgeon, Charles H. *First Things First*. An address delivered at the monthly meeting of the London Bank’s Prayer Union, September, 28<sup>th</sup>, 1885. Sermon #1864. Vol. 31. London: Passmore and Alabaster.

## In Christ

*“No man knoweth the Father, save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him.”* (Matthew 11:27)

Men may believe in God, but there is no way that they can know the living God except in Christ. They may know of His existence, but His essence and glory are only revealed in Christ. They may know of His works, but His will and wisdom are only seen in Christ. They may know of His power, but His purpose and decrees are only revealed in Christ. They may be acquainted with His miracles, but His mercy and grace are only received in Christ. They may behold His judgments, but His justice satisfied and honored is only revealed in Christ.

If we miss a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus, we may talk of God all our lives and never really know Him.

## Sovereign Mercy

Mercy that is not sovereign is merited and, therefore, not mercy at all. Grace that is not sovereign is earned and, therefore, not grace. God said, *“I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy”* (Ex. 33:19).

## 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; 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.”<sup>9</sup>

If you are to understand anything of astronomy, you must begin at the center: the sun. And if you put anything else in the center of your system of teaching and doctrine except the Lord Jesus Christ, you will only fall into more and more error and confusion. 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 see him* as my righteousness and sin offering! I see trial and sorrows every day, but *I see him* caring for me and in His good providence working them all together for my good! I see death and judgment approaching; but *I see him*, my Justifier, the resurrection and the life! I see friends and neighbors in darkness, ignorance, and unbelief; but *I 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 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 that one sight will make amends for the dark things you see!

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<sup>9</sup> Spurgeon, Charles H. *Open Heart for the Great Savior*. Sermon no. 669. Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit. Vol. 12. London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1866.

## Scholars in Experience

Be true to truth, but not turbulent and scornful. Restore such as are fallen; help them up again with all the compassion of Christ. Set the broken bones with the grace of the gospel.

Confident believer, despise not weak believers; you may someday come to wish even to be in their state. Be faithful to the infirmities of others, realizing especially your own! Visit the sick, the elderly, and the lonely; they are usually scholars in experience.

Be content with little of the world and covet more faith.

## The Sacrifice of Himself

What did Christ offer to God? He made a sacrifice of *himself*. It is true that He sacrificed His rest, His honor, His reputation, and His life; but the essence of His sacrifice was *himself*. “*He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*” (Heb. 9:26). “*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*” (1 Pet.2:24).

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

## The Lord Knows Them That are His

Jehovah-jireh: The Lord will provide. (Gen. 22:13-14)

Jehovah-rapha: The Lord that healeth. (Ex. 15:26)

Jehovah-nissi: The Lord our banner. (Ex. 17:8-15)

Jehovah-shalom: The Lord our peace. (Judges 6:24)

Jehovah-ra-ah: The Lord my shepherd. (Ps. 23:1)

Jehovah-tsidkenu: The Lord our righteousness. (Jer. 23:6)

Jehovah-shammah: The Lord is present. (Ez. 48:35)

And:

*“He bath known my NAME”* (Ps. 91:14)

## **Cast All On Christ**

The most difficult thing for any of us to do is to *totally* and *completely* trust and rest in our blessed Lord Jesus to redeem us, sanctify us, and make us accepted of the Father. We are so prone to self-righteousness and works that we have a constant battle trying to remember that *“man at his BEST STATE is altogether vanity”* but also that, in his *weakest moments*, is no less loved and accepted if he is in Christ.

As Bro. Fortner said, “My relationship with the eternal God (in Christ) does in great measure determine what I do. But what I do (good or bad) in no way determines my relationship with the eternal God.” Actually, *“In my flesh dwelleth NO GOOD THING.”* It is in Christ that the Father is well-pleased; and only in Christ can He love, accept, and be pleased with me.

I did not come to Christ on the basis of my works, nor am I kept in Christ on the basis of my works! I looked to Him *then* for *all things*, and I look to Him *now* for *all things*! Any look within will serve only to discourage and depress me; but, looking to Christ, the author and finisher of my faith, will only encourage me, for He never changes. His gift of life and calling to grace is without change.

The command, *“Look unto Me and be ye saved,”* is not only the hope and strength of the seeking sinner, but it is the constant hope and strength of the believing sinner. I know my sins, but I rejoice in his grace. I know my weakness, but I rest in His strength. I know my emptiness, but I am complete in Him.

“O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear”<sup>10</sup> all because we do not cast our sins and our souls on Christ and *leave them there!*

## **Christ Did Not Suffer in Vain**

God has declared in His Word that He will show mercy, that He will redeem and glorify a people, and that heaven will be populated with a holy people like His beloved Son. And here is the greatest evidence that His promise will be fulfilled: *“He that spared not his own son.”*

The Father did not withhold the Son from all that He must be, endure, suffer, and accomplish in order to take up our hopeless case and redeem us. He gave Christ to be our representative, sacrifice, sin-offering, and mediator.

If God so loved that He gave Christ, and Christ so loved that He gave Himself, shall we *not* freely and abundantly receive all that He purchased for us? Did our Lord suffer in vain? Perish the thought!

## **The Two-Fold Message of Grace**

The most humbling and challenging thing that I face – the great concern of my heart – is that my generation experience a return to the preaching of the gospel of God’s grace. This generation is plagued with a gospel of works and are strangers to the gospel of redemption. I want a return to the message used of God in other days to awaken men to their need and to reveal the grace and glory of the Lord Jesus.

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<sup>10</sup> Scriven, Joseph. *What a Friend we Have in Jesus*. 1855.

Rolfe Barnard used to say, “The two-fold message of grace is: (1) all flesh is grass and (2) behold your God!” This is the message that takes away all of the glory and dignity of the flesh and proclaims the redemptive glory of Christ.

The results of this message will be a sense of the awesome holiness of God, the inability and sinfulness of the flesh, and the total sufficiency of the person and work of Christ. Perhaps once against we will hear men and women cry,

“Depth of mercy! Can there be  
Mercy still reserved for me?  
Can my God His wrath forbear,  
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?”<sup>11</sup>

## True Humility

True humility is to have a right estimate of one’s self. It is not to deny or underestimate true ability, real knowledge, and obvious gifts. A gifted singer knows he can sing. An intelligent person is aware of his knowledge. A successful businessman knows his business. An artist knows his skills. It is not humility to speak what one does not truly feel.

True humility is born when one discovers the *source* of all gifts, talents, and knowledge. “*WHO maketh thee to differ?*” It is certain that we are different and some have what others do not have in different areas. But it is the Lord God, in His sovereign will, who has given us all that which we have. “*Without Him we can do nothing.*” “*A man can receive nothing except it be GIVEN him from heaven!*”

The higher a man grows in the grace of God, the lower he will be in his own eyes. A man who has been introduced to what really happened in the garden of Eden and what really happened on the cross of Calvary will have no problem with pride and arrogance.

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<sup>11</sup> Wesley, Charles. *Depth of Mercy*. Hymns and Sacred Poems. London: 1740.

Apart from the mercy and grace of God, he knows *where* he could be and he knows *what* he could be! *“I am what I am by the grace of God.”*

## Forgiveness

The fact that we constantly need Divine forgiveness ought to encourage us to forgive. Another may do many things for me, but no man can forgive my enemies but *I myself!* You may say, “I will never forgive.” Then, for your sake, I hope you never sin!

Forgiveness is not only something I owe to others, it is something I owe to myself. And I do myself great harm by holding grudges.

## Things that Promote Peace

*“Let us therefore follow after the things which promote peace, and things wherewith one may edify another”*

Romans 14:19

- 1.) Be careful to *love* one another with a true heart. *“Love covers a multitude of failures.”*
- 2.) Avoid a spirit of *argument and debate*. One may win an argument and lose a friend.
- 3.) Beware of *jealousy*. Jealousy destroys happiness and builds suspicion.
- 4.) Beware of *envy*. Let us learn to rejoice in another’s gifts, blessings, and happiness. God gives as HE will!

5.) Do not *meddle* in the private lives and domestic affairs of others.

6.) Guard against a *touchy temper*.

“For every trifling thing to take offense  
Shows either great pride or little sense.”

7.) Learn to *keep a confidence*. “He that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.”

8.) Strive to *heal differences*. “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

9.) Be always ready to *forgive anything*. “Forgive us our sins AS we forgive those who sin against us.”