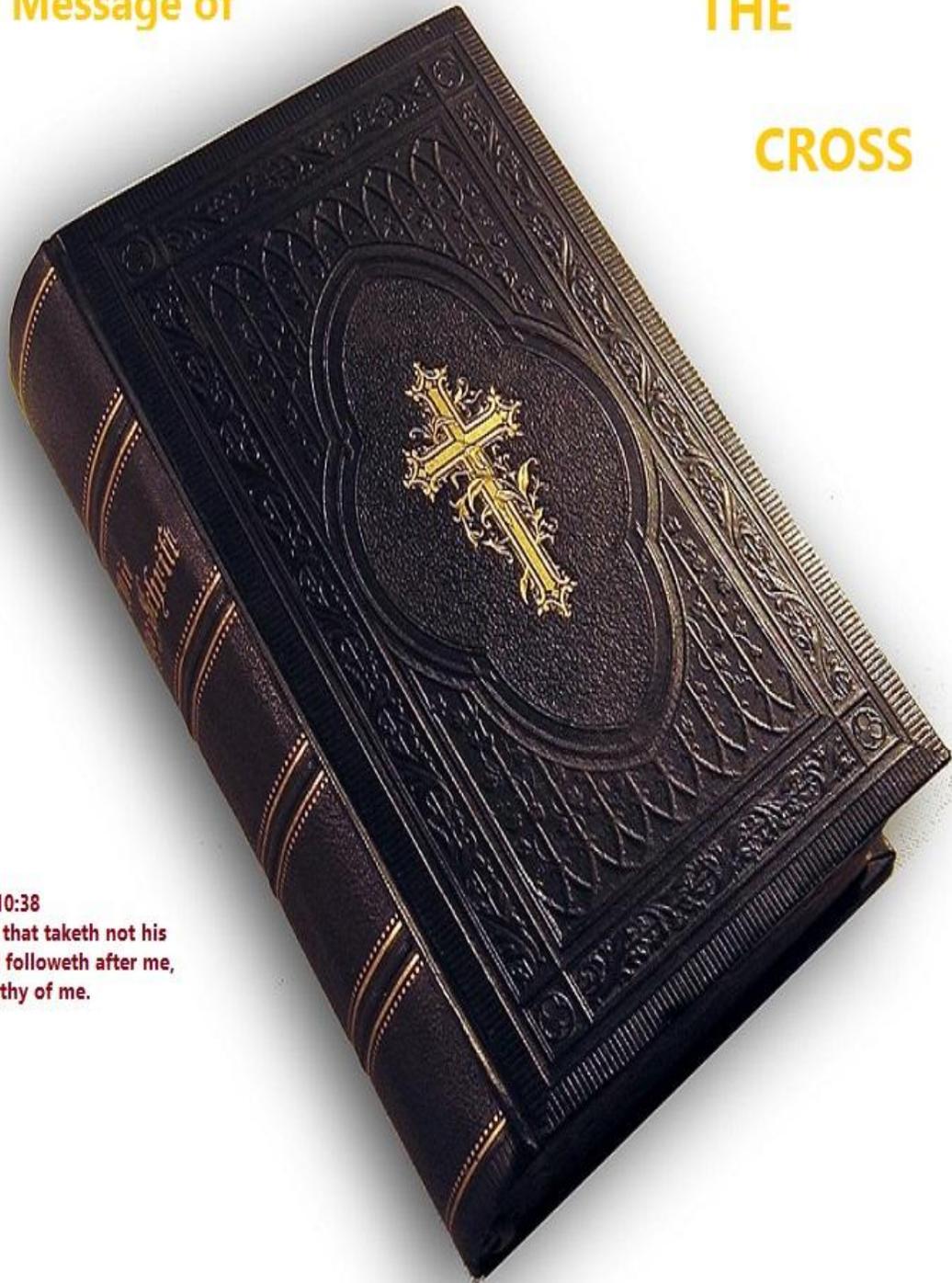


The Message of

THE

CROSS



Matthew 10:38

And he that taketh not his
cross, and followeth after me,
is not worthy of me.

Compiled by Dr. Harold Bollinger

Table of contents

Forward	3
Chapter 1 The Meaning of the Cross	4
Chapter 2 Consider the suffering of the Son of God.	9
Chapter 3 The purpose of the cross	13
Chapter 4 The cleansing of sin is through the sacrifice of Christ.	16
Chapter 5 Christ lives in me.	21
Chapter 6 The reason Jesus came into the world	25
Chapter 7 The power of the cross	31
Chapter 8 The stability of the cross	36
Chapter 9 What Jesus accomplished for us on the cross	39
Chapter 10 God's light brings fellowship with one another.	42

Forward

To hear the details of Christ's death on the cross is disturbing! But, it is a necessary truth that must be proclaimed and must be heard before there can be salvation. Friend, there is only one way for you to get to God and that is by the way of the cross. There is no salvation apart from faith in the work of Jesus on Calvary!)

Through Jesus, there is victory

Rev. 12:11

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

The servants of God overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, as the cause. By the word of their testimony: the powerful preaching of the gospel is mighty, through God, to pull down strong holds.

By their courage and patience in sufferings: they loved not their lives so well but they could lay them down in Christ's cause. These were the warriors and the weapons by which Christianity overthrew the power of pagan idolatry; and if Christians had continued to fight with these weapons, and such as these, their victories would have been more numerous and glorious, and the effects more lasting.

The redeemed overcame by a simple reliance on the blood of Christ, as the only ground of their hopes.

Heaven Is Delivered

The blood is the key that unlocks the gates of glory! When the blood is applied, the child of God becomes instantly destined for an eternity in Heaven with the Lord! That is His promise to every believer

Has the blood of Christ been applied to your life?

Chapter 1

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

1 Cor. 1:17-25

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. [20] Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Paul had been brought up in Jewish learning; but the plain preaching of a crucified Jesus, was more powerful than all the oratory and philosophy of the heathen world.

This is the sum and substance of the gospel.

Christ crucified is the foundation of all our hopes, the fountain of all our joys. And by his death we live.

The preaching of salvation for lost sinners by the sufferings and death of the Son of God, if explained and faithfully applied, appears foolishness to those in the way to destruction.

The sensual, the covetous, the proud, and ambitious, alike see that the gospel opposes their favorite pursuits.

But those who receive the gospel, and are enlightened by the Spirit of God, see more of God's wisdom and power in the doctrine of Christ crucified, than in all his other works.

God left a great part of the world to follow the dictates of man's boasted reason, and the event has shown that human wisdom is folly, and is unable to find or retain the knowledge of God as the Creator.

It pleased him, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.

By the foolishness of preaching; not by what could justly be called foolish preaching. But the thing preached was foolishness to worldly-wise men.

The gospel ever was, and ever will be, foolishness to all in the road to destruction.

The message of Christ, plainly delivered, ever has been a sure touchstone by which men may learn what road they are travelling.

But the despised doctrine of salvation by faith in a crucified Saviour, God in human nature, purchasing the church with his own blood, to save multitudes, even all that believe, from ignorance, delusion, and vice, has been blessed in every age.

And the weakest instruments God uses, are stronger in their effects, than the strongest men can use. Not that there is foolishness or weakness in God, but what men consider as such, overcomes all their admired wisdom and strength.

THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS

The Jews were looking for a Messiah Who would throw off the Roman yoke and give them liberty from their captors. They totally missed the fact that their Messiah would be One Who would suffer for the sins of the people.

Isaiah 53:1-3

Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he

hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Nowhere in all the Old Testament is it so plainly and fully prophesied, that Christ ought to suffer, and then to enter into his glory, as in this chapter.

But to this day few discern, or will acknowledge, that Divine power which goes with the word.

The authentic and most important report of salvation for sinners, through the Son of God, is disregarded. The low condition he submitted to, and his appearance in the world, were not agreeable to the ideas the Jews had formed of the Messiah.

It was expected that he should come in pomp; instead of that, he grew up as a plant, silently, and insensibly.

He had nothing of the glory which one might have thought to meet with him. His whole life was not only humble as to outward condition, but also sorrowful.

Being made sin for us, he underwent the sentence sin had exposed us to. Carnal hearts see nothing in the Lord Jesus to desire an interest in him. Alas! By many is he still despised in his people, and rejected as to his doctrine and authority!

The Suffering of Christ

Isaiah 53:4-9

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

In these verses is an account of the sufferings of Christ; also of the design of his sufferings. It was for our sins, and in our stead, that our Lord Jesus suffered. We have all sinned, and have come short of the glory of God. Sinners have their beloved sin, their own evil way, of which they are fond.

Our sins deserve all griefs and sorrows, even the most severe. We are saved from the ruin, to which by sin we become liable, by laying our sins on Christ. This atonement was to be made for our sins.

And this is the only way of salvation. Our sins were the thorns in Christ's head, the nails in his hands and feet, the spear in his side.

He was delivered to death for our offences. By his sufferings he purchased for us the Spirit and grace of God, to mortify our corruptions, which are the distempers of our souls.

We may well endure our lighter sufferings, if He has taught us to esteem all things but loss for him, and to love him who has first loved us.

We preach Christ crucified.

1 Cor. 1:21-24

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified,

unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; [24] But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

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Chapter 2

Consider the suffering of the son of God.

While we survey the sufferings of the Son of God, let us remember our transgressions, and consider him as suffering under the load of our guilt.

Here is laid a firm foundation for the trembling sinner to rest his soul upon. We are the purchase of his blood, and the monuments of his grace; for this he continually pleads and prevails, destroying the works of the devil.

Jesus was scourged

Matthew 27:26

Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

Crucifixion was a death used only among the Romans; it was very terrible and miserable. A cross was laid on the ground, to which the hands and feet were nailed, it was then lifted up and fixed upright, so that the weight of the body hung on the nails, till the sufferer died in agony.

Christ thus answered the type of the brazen serpent raised on a pole. Christ underwent all the misery and shame here related, that he might purchase for us everlasting life, and joy, and glory.

Christ was beaten.

Luke 22:63-64

And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?

Those that condemned Jesus for a blasphemer, were the vilest blasphemers. He referred them to his second coming, for the full proof of his being the Christ, to their confusion, since they would not admit the proof of it to their conviction.

Jesus Christ was spit upon

Matthew 27:30

And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

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The beard was plucked from Jesus face

Isa. 50:6

I gave my back to the miters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

He was to declare the truths which comfort the broken, contrite heart, those weary of sin, harassed with afflictions.

And as the Holy Spirit was upon him that he might speak as never man spake; so the same Divine influence daily wakened him to pray, to preach the gospel, and to receive and deliver the whole will of the Father.

The Father justified the Son when he accepted the satisfaction he made for the sin of man. Christ speaks in the name of all believers.

Jesus was mocked.

Matthew 27:27-29

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

Crucifixion was a death used only among the Romans; it was very terrible and miserable. A cross was laid on the ground, to which the hands and feet were nailed, it was then lifted up and fixed upright, so that the weight of the body hung on the nails, till the sufferer died in agony.

Jesus was stripped naked.

Matthew 27:35

And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, they parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

It was usual to put shame upon malefactors, by a writing to notify the crime for which they suffered. So they set up one over Christ's head. This they designed for his reproach, but God so overruled it, that even his accusation was to his honour.

There were crucified with him at the same time, two robbers. He was, at his death, numbered among the transgressors, that we, at our death, might be numbered among the saints.

The taunts and jeers he received are here recorded. The enemies of Christ labour to make others believe that of religion and of the people of God, which they themselves know to be false.

The chief priests and scribes, and the elders, upbraided Jesus with being the King of Israel.

Jesus was nailed to the cross.

Matthew 27:38

Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

Many people could like the King of Israel well enough, if he would but come down from the cross; if they could but have his kingdom without the tribulation through which they must enter into it. But if no cross, then no Christ, no crown.

Those that would reign with him, must be willing to suffer with him. Thus our Lord Jesus, having undertaken to satisfy the justice of God, did it, by submitting to the punishment of the worst of men.

Jesus willingly drank the bitter cup.

Luke 22:41-42

And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

When Christ was in his agony, there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. It was a part of his humiliation that he was thus strengthened by a ministering spirit.

Being in agony, he prayed more earnestly. Prayer, though never out of season, is in a special manner seasonable when we are in an agony.

In this agony his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down. This showed the travail of his soul. We should pray also to be enabled to resist unto the shedding of our blood, striving against sin, if ever called to it.

Chapter 3

THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS

Humiliation, and Exaltation of Christ bring the Blessings to Mankind from His Death

Isaiah 53:10-12

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Come, and see how Christ loved us! We could not put him in our stead, but he put himself. Thus he took away the sin of the world, by taking it on himself.

He made himself subject to death, which to us is the wages of sin. Observe the graces and glories of his state of exaltation.

Christ will not commit the care of his family to any other.

God's purposes shall take effect. And whatever is undertaken according to God's pleasure shall prosper.

He shall see it accomplished in the conversion and salvation of sinners. There are many whom Christ justifies, even as many as he gave his life a ransom for.

By faith we are justified; thus God is most glorified, free grace most advanced, self-most abased, and our happiness secured.

We must know him, and believe in him, as one that bore our sins, and saved us from sinking under the load, by taking it upon himself. Sin and Satan, death and hell, the world and the flesh, are the strong foes he has vanquished.

What God designed for the Redeemer he shall certainly possess. When he led captivity captive, he received gifts for men, that he might give gifts to men.

The Lord set his love upon you because he loved you.

Deut. 7:7-8

The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Those who are in communion with God, must have no communication with the unfruitful works of darkness. Limiting the orders to destroy, to the nations here mentioned, plainly shows that after ages were not to draw this into a precedent.

A proper understanding of the evil of sin, and of the mystery of a crucified Saviour, will enable us to perceive the justice of God in all his punishments, temporal and eternal.

We must deal decidedly with our lusts that war against our souls; let us not show them any mercy, but mortify, and crucify, and utterly destroy them

God has drawn you with an everlasting kindness.

Jeremiah 31:3

The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

God assures his people that he will again take them into covenant relation to himself. When brought very low, and difficulties appear, it is good to remember that it has been so with the church formerly.

But it is hard under present frowns to take comfort from former smiles; yet it is the happiness of those who, through grace, are interested in the love of God, that it is an everlasting love, from everlasting in the counsels, to everlasting in the continuance.

God commendeth his love toward us.

Romans 5:6-8

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Christ died for sinners; not only such as were useless, but such as were guilty and hateful; such that their everlasting destruction would be to the glory of God's justice. Christ died to save us, not in our sins, but from our sins; and we were yet sinners when he died for us.

The cross is God's statement of love to the world.

John 15:13

Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.

As the Father loved Christ, who was most worthy, so he loved his disciples, who were unworthy. All that love the Saviour should continue in their love to him, and take all occasions to show it.

The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, but the joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a continual feast. They are to show their love to him by keeping his commandments. If the same power that first shed abroad the love of Christ's in our hearts, did not keep us in that love, we should not long abide in it. Christ's love to us should direct us to love each other.

Chapter 4

The cleansing of sin is through the sacrifice of an innocent one.

There is no other way to cleanse sin, but through the sacrifice of an innocent one in the place of the guilty one,

Heb. 9:22.

This is seen all the way back in the beginning when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden.

Nothing could be clean to a sinner, not even his religious duties; except as his guilt was done away by the death of a sacrifice, of value sufficient for that end, and unless he continually depended upon it. May we ascribe all real good works to the same all-procuring cause, and offer our spiritual sacrifices as sprinkled with Christ's blood, and so purified from their defilement.

Sin atoned by animals was never taken away.

Gen. 3:21.

This same line of thought continues all the way through the days of the Tabernacle and the Temple. There, sin was atoned for by the blood of sheep, bulls and goats, but it was never taken away.

The beasts, from whose skins they were clothed, it is supposed were slain, not for man's food, but for sacrifice, to typify Christ, the great Sacrifice.

Adam and Eve made for themselves aprons of fig-leaves, a covering too narrow for them to wrap themselves in, Isa 28:20. Such are all the rags of our own righteousness.

But God made them coats of skin, large, strong, durable, and fit for them: such is the righteousness of Christ; therefore put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The ransom Jesus suffered is of infinite worth.

Hebrews 10:4

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

But when "God manifested in the flesh," became the sacrifice, and his death upon the accursed tree the ransom, then the Sufferer being of infinite worth, his free-will sufferings were of infinite value.

The death of Jesus on the cross settled the sin debt of man.

Heb. 10:10-11.

However, the Lord Jesus went to the cross and died for the sins of humanity. When He did, His death on the cross forever settled the sin debt of man,

The atoning sacrifice must be one capable of consenting, and must of his own will place himself in the sinner's stead: Christ did so. The fountain of all that Christ has done for his people, is the sovereign will and grace of God. The righteousness brought in, and the sacrifice once offered by Christ, are of eternal power, and his salvation shall never be done away.

They are of power to make all the comers thereunto perfect; they derive from the atoning blood, strength and motives for obedience, and inward comfort.

Hebrews 10:12-14

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Under the new covenant, or gospel dispensation, full and final pardon is to be had. This makes a vast difference between the new covenant and the old one. Under the old, sacrifices must be often repeated, and after all, only pardon as to this world was to be obtained by them. Under the new, one Sacrifice is enough to procure for all nations and ages, spiritual pardon.

Hebrews 9:24-28

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with blood of others;

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

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

It is evident that the sacrifices of Christ are infinitely better than those of the law, which could neither procure pardon for sin, nor impart power against it.

Sin would still have been upon us, and have had dominion over us; but Jesus Christ, by one sacrifice, has destroyed the works of the devil, that believers may be made righteous, holy, and happy.

As no wisdom, learning, virtue, wealth, or power, can keep one of the human race from death, so nothing can deliver a sinner from being condemned at the Day of Judgment, except the atoning sacrifice of Christ; nor will one be saved from eternal punishment who despises or neglects this great salvation.

The believer knows that his Redeemer liveth, and that he shall see him. Here is the faith and patience of the church, of all sincere believers. Hence is their continual prayer as the fruit and expression of their faith, even so come, Lord Jesus.

All revelation comes through Jesus Christ.

Rev. 1:5

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

This book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ; the whole Bible is so; for all revelation comes through Christ, and all relates to him. Its principal subject is to discover the purposes of God concerning the affairs of the church, and of the nations as connected therewith, to the end of the world.

These events would surely come to pass; and they would begin to come to pass very shortly. Though Christ is himself God, and has light and life in himself, yet, as Mediator between God and man, he receives instructions from the Father. To him we owe the knowledge of what we are to expect from God, and what he expects from us.

We are redeemed with the blood of Jesus.

1 Peter 1:18-19.

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Holy confidence in God as a Father, and awful fear of him as a Judge, agree together; and to regard God always as a Judge, makes him dear to us as a Father.

If believers do evil, God will visit them with corrections. Then, let Christians not doubt God's faithfulness to his promises, nor give way to enslaving dread of his wrath, but let them reverence his holiness.

The fearless professor is defenseless, and Satan takes him captive at his will; the desponding professor has no heart to avail himself of his advantages, and is easily brought to surrender. The price paid for man's redemption was the precious blood of Christ.

Eternal life comes only through the sacrifice of Christ.

John 10:28

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Through Jesus, there is victory

Rev. 12:11

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

The servants of God overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, as the cause. By the word of their testimony: the powerful preaching of the gospel is mighty, through God, to pull down strong holds.

By their courage and patience in sufferings: they loved not their lives so well but they could lay them down in Christ's cause. These were the warriors and the weapons by which Christianity overthrew the power of pagan idolatry; and if Christians had continued to fight with these weapons, and such as these, their victories would have been more numerous and glorious, and the effects more lasting.

The redeemed overcame by a simple reliance on the blood of Christ, as the only ground of their hopes.

Heaven Is Delivered

The blood is the key that unlocks the gates of glory! When the blood is applied, the child of God becomes instantly destined for an eternity in Heaven with the Lord! That is His promise to every believer

And, there is only one way to get to that glorious place.

John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Chapter 5

Christ lives in me.

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Here, in his own person, the apostle describes the spiritual or hidden life of a believer. The old man is crucified, Rom 6:6, but the new man is living; sin is mortified, and grace is quickened.

He has the comforts and the triumphs of grace; yet that grace is not from himself, but from another. Believers see themselves living in a state of dependence on Christ.

Hence it is, that though he lives in the flesh, yet he does not live after the flesh. Those who have true faith, live by that faith; and faith fastens upon Christ's giving himself for us. He loved me, and gave himself for me. As if the apostle said, The Lord saw me fleeing from him more and more. Such wickedness, error, and ignorance were in my will and understanding, that it was not possible for me to be ransomed by any other means than by such a price.

Consider well this price. Here notice the false faith of many. And their profession is accordingly; they have the form of godliness without the power of it. They think they believe the articles of faith aright, but they are deceived. For to believe in Christ crucified, is not only to believe that he was crucified, but also to believe that I am crucified with him.

And this is to know Christ crucified. Hence we learn what the nature of grace is. God's grace cannot stand with man's merit. Grace is no grace unless it is freely given every way. The more simply the believer relies on Christ for every thing, the more devotedly does he walk before Him in all his ordinances and commandments.

Christ lives and reigns in him, and he lives here on earth by faith in the Son of God, which works by love, causes obedience, and changes into his holy image.

Thus he neither abuses the grace of God, nor makes it in vain.

Boast only in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ

Galatians 6:14

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

Proud, vain, and carnal hearts, are content with just so much religion as will help to keep up a fair show. But the apostle professes his own faith, hope, and joy; and that his principal glory was in the cross of Christ.

By which is here meant, his sufferings and death on the cross, the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Redeemer. By Christ, or by the cross of Christ, the world is crucified to the believer, and he to the world. The more we consider the sufferings of the Redeemer from the world, the less likely shall we be to love the world.

The apostle was as little affected by its charms, as a beholder would be by any thing which had been graceful in the face of a crucified person, when he beholds it blackened in the agonies of death.

He was no more affected by the objects around him, than one who is expiring would be struck with any of the prospects his dying eyes might view from the cross on which he hung. And as to those who have truly believed in Christ Jesus, all things are counted as utterly worthless compared with him.

Jesus Christ was hated by the world

1 Cor. 1:18

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Paul had been bred up in Jewish learning; but the plain preaching of a crucified Jesus, was more powerful than all the oratory and philosophy of the heathen world.

This is the sum and substance of the gospel. Christ crucified is the foundation of all our hopes, the fountain of all our joys. And by his death we live. The preaching of salvation for lost sinners by the sufferings and death of the Son of God, if explained and faithfully applied, appears foolishness to those in the way to destruction.

The sensual, the covetous, the proud, and ambitious, alike see that the gospel opposes their favorite pursuits. But those who receive the gospel, and are enlightened by the Spirit of God, see more of God's wisdom and power in the doctrine of Christ crucified, than in all his other works. God left a great part of the world to follow the dictates of man's boasted reason, and the event has shown that human wisdom is folly, and is unable to find or retain the knowledge of God as the Creator.

It pleased him, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. By the foolishness of preaching; not by what could justly be called foolish preaching. But the thing preached was foolishness to worldly-wise men.

The gospel ever was, and ever will be, foolishness to all in the road to destruction. The message of Christ, plainly delivered, ever has been a sure touchstone by which men may learn what road they are travelling. But the despised doctrine of salvation by faith in a crucified Saviour, God in human nature, purchasing the church with his own blood, to save multitudes, even all that believe, from ignorance, delusion, and vice, has been blessed in every age.

And the weakest instruments God uses, are stronger in their effects, than the strongest men can use. Not that there is foolishness or weakness in God, but what men consider as such, overcomes all their admired wisdom and strength.

The enemies of the cross will end in destruction.

Philip. 3:18-21

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Believers make Christ all in all, and set their hearts upon another world. If they differ from one another, and are not of the same judgment in lesser matters, yet they must not judge one another; while they all meet now in Christ, and hope to meet shortly in heaven.

Let them join in all the great things in which they are agreed, and wait for further light as to lesser things wherein they differ.

The enemies of the cross of Christ mind nothing but their sensual appetites. Sin is the sinner's shame, especially when gloried in. The way of those who mind earthly things, may seem pleasant, but death and hell are at the end of it. If we choose their way, we shall share their end.

The life of a Christian is in heaven, where his Head and his home are, and where he hopes to be shortly; he sets his affections upon things above; and where his heart is, there will his conversation be.

There is glory kept for the bodies of the saints, in which they will appear at the resurrection. Then the body will be made glorious; not only raised again to life, but raised to great advantage. Observe the power by which this change will be wrought.

May we be always prepared for the coming of our Judge; looking to have our vile bodies changed by his Almighty power, and applying to him daily to new-create our souls unto holiness; to deliver us from our enemies, and to employ our bodies and souls as instruments of righteousness in his service.

Chapter 6

The reason Jesus came into the world

Isaiah 53:5

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

We have all sinned, and have come short of the glory of God. Sinners have their beloved sin, their own evil way, of which they are fond. Our sins deserve all griefs and sorrows, even the most severe.

We are saved from the ruin, to which by sin we become liable, by laying our sins on Christ. This atonement was to be made for our sins. And this is the only way of salvation.

Our sins were the thorns in Christ's head, the nails in his hands and feet, the spear in his side. He was delivered to death for our offences. By his sufferings he purchased for us the Spirit and grace of God, to mortify our corruptions, which are the distempers of our souls.

Some are not mindful of the things of God

Matthew 16:21-23

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou severest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Christ reveals his mind to his people gradually. From that time, when the apostles had made the full confession of Christ, that he was the Son of God, he began to show them of his sufferings.

He spake this to set right the mistakes of his disciples about the outward pomp and power of his kingdom. Those that follow Christ, must not expect great or high things in this world. Peter would have Christ to dread suffering as much as he did; but we mistake, if we measure Christ's love and patience by our own.

We do not read of any thing said or done by any of his disciples, at any time, that Christ resented so much as this.

Whoever takes us from that which is good, and would make us fear to do too much for God, speaks Satan's language. Whatever appears to be a temptation to sin, must be resisted with abhorrence, and not be parleyed with.

Those that decline suffering for Christ, saviour more of the things of man than of the things of God.

Jesus, the king of the Jews.

John 19:17-30

And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, what I have written I have written.

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, they parted my raiment

among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, it is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Christ's promises make his precepts easy, and his yoke pleasant and very comfortable; yet this promise was as much a trial of the young man's faith, as the precept was of his charity and contempt of the world.

It is required of us in following Christ, that we duly attend his ordinances, strictly follow his pattern, and cheerfully submit to his disposals; and this from love to him, and in dependence on him.

To sell all, and give to the poor, will not serve, but we are to follow Christ. The gospel is the only remedy for lost sinners. Many abstain from gross vices who do not attend to their obligations to God.

Thousands of instances of disobedience in thought, word, and deed, are marked against them in the book of God. Thus numbers forsake Christ, loving this present world: they feel convictions and desires, but they depart sorrowful, perhaps trembling. It behoves us to try ourselves in these matters, for the Lord will try us.

The Recompense of Christ's Followers

Though Christ spoke so strongly, few that have riches do not trust in them. How few that are poor are not tempted to envy! But men's earnestness in this matter is like their toiling to build a high wall to shut themselves and their children out of heaven.

It should be satisfaction to those who are in a low condition, that they are not exposed to the temptations of a high and prosperous condition.

If they live more hardly in this world than the rich, yet, if they get more easily to a better world, they have no reason to complain. Christ's words show that it is hard for a rich man to be a good Christian, and to be saved.

The way to heaven is a narrow way to all, and the gate that leads into it, a strait gate; particularly so to rich people. More duties are expected from them than from others, and more sins easily beset them. It is hard not to be charmed with a smiling world. Rich people have a great account to make up for their opportunities above others. It is utterly impossible for a man that sets his heart upon his riches, to get to heaven.

Christ used an expression, denoting a difficulty altogether unconquerable by the power of man. Nothing less than the almighty grace of God will enable a rich man to get over this difficulty. Who then can be saved? If riches hinder rich people, are not pride and sinful lusts found in those not rich, and as dangerous to them?

Who can be saved? Say the disciples. None, saith Christ, by any created power. The beginning, progress, and perfecting the work of salvation, depend wholly on the almighty power of God, to which all things are possible.

Not that rich people can be saved in their worldliness, but that they should be saved from it. Peter said, we have forsaken all. Alas! It was but a poor all, only a few boats and nets; yet observe how Peter speaks, as if it had been some mighty thing.

We are too apt to make the most of our services and sufferings, our expenses and losses, for Christ. However, Christ does not upbraid them; though it was but little that they had forsaken, yet it was their all, and as dear to them as if it had been more.

Christ took it kindly that they left it to follow him; he accepts according to what a man hath.

Our Lord's promise to the apostles is, that when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, he will make all things new, and they shall sit with him in judgement on those who will be judged according to their doctrine.

This sets forth the honour, dignity, and authority of their office and ministry. Our Lord added, that every one who had forsaken possessions or comforts, for his sake and the gospel, would be recompensed at last.

May God give us faith to rest our hope on this his promise; then we shall be ready for every service or sacrifice. Our Saviour, in the last verse, does away a mistake of some. The heavenly inheritance is not given as earthly ones are, but according to God's pleasure.

Let us not trust in promising appearances or outward profession. Others may, for aught we know, become eminent in faith and holiness.

Jesus speaks salvation to a thief on the cross.

Luke 23:39-43

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, if thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou come into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Observe his humility in this prayer. All his request is, Lord, remember me; quite referring it to Jesus in what way to remember him.

Thus he was humbled in true repentance, and he brought forth all the fruits for repentance his circumstances would admit. Christ upon the cross, is gracious like Christ upon the throne.

Though he was in the greatest struggle and agony, yet he had pity for a poor penitent.

By this act of grace we are to understand that Jesus Christ died to open the kingdom of heaven to all penitent, obedient believers.

It is a single instance in Scripture; it should teach us to despair of none, and that none should despair of themselves; but lest it should be abused, it is contrasted with the awful state of the other thief, who died hardened in unbelief, though a crucified Saviour was so near him.

Jesus commits his spirit unto God.

Luke 23:44-47

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, certainly this was a righteous man.

We have here the death of Christ magnified by the wonders that attended it, and his death explained by the words with which he breathed out his soul. He was willing to offer himself.

Let us seek to glorify God by true repentance and conversion; by protesting against those who crucify the Saviour; by a sober, righteous, and godly life; and by employing our talents in the service of Him who died for us and rose again.

Chapter 7

The Power of the Cross

2 Cor. 5:15-17

And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know him no more.

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

A Christian's life should be devoted to Christ. Alas, how many show the worthlessness of their professed faith and love, by living to themselves and to the world!

The Necessity of Regeneration, and of Reconciliation with God through Christ

The renewed man acts upon new principles, by new rules, with new ends, and in new company. The believer is created anew; his heart is not merely set right, but a new heart is given him. He is the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Though the same as a man, he is changed in his character and conduct.

These words must and do mean more than an outward reformation. The man who formerly saw no beauty in the Saviour that he should desire him, now loves him above all things.

Glory only in the Cross of Christ.

Galatians 6:14

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

The more we consider the sufferings of the Redeemer from the world, the less likely shall we be to love the world.

The apostle was as little affected by its charms, as a beholder would be by any thing which had been graceful in the face of a crucified person, when he beholds it blackened in the agonies of death.

He was no more affected by the objects around him, than one who is expiring would be struck with any of the prospects his dying eyes might view from the cross on which he hung.

And as to those who have truly believed in Christ Jesus, all things are counted as utterly worthless compared with him. There is a new creation; old things are passed away, and new views and dispositions are brought in under the regenerating influences of God the Holy Spirit.

Believers are brought into a new world, and being created in Christ Jesus unto good works, are formed to a life of holiness.

Jesus had paid the price for all.

1 Cor. 1:18

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Christ crucified is the foundation of all our hopes, the fountain of all our joys. And by his death we live. The preaching of salvation for lost sinners by the sufferings and death of the Son of God, if explained and faithfully applied, appears foolishness to those in the way to destruction.

The sensual, the covetous, the proud, and ambitious, alike see that the gospel opposes their favorite pursuits. But those who receive the gospel, and are enlightened by the Spirit of God, see more of God's wisdom and power in the doctrine of Christ crucified, than in all his other works

Christ died for sins according to the Scripture.

1 Cor. 15:3

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

The word resurrection, usually points out our existence beyond the grave. Of the apostle's doctrine not a trace can be found in all the teaching of philosophers. The doctrine of Christ's death and resurrection, is the foundation of Christianity.

Remove this, and all our hopes for eternity sink at once. And it is by holding this truth firm that Christians stand in the day of trial, and are kept faithful to God. We believe in vain, unless we keep in the faith of the gospel.

Jesus came to minister and to give his life.

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Our care must be, that we may have wisdom and grace to know how to suffer with him; and we may trust him to provide what the degrees of our glory shall be. Christ shows them that dominion was generally abused in the world.

If Jesus would gratify all our desires, it would soon appear that we desire fame or authority, and are unwilling to taste of his cup, or to have his baptism; and should often be ruined by having our prayers answered. But he loves us, and will only give his people what is good for them.

Peter recognizes who Jesus is.

Matthew 16:15-16

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Our Lord declared Peter to be blessed, as the teaching of God made him differ from his unbelieving countrymen. Christ added that he had named him Peter, in allusion to his stability or firmness in professing the truth.

Without doubt Christ himself is the Rock, the tried foundation of the church; and woe to him that attempts to lay any other! Peter's confession is this rock as to doctrine. If Jesus be not the Christ, those that own him are not of the church, but deceivers and deceived.

Jesus tells of his death on the cross.

Matthew 16:21

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Christ reveals his mind to his people gradually. From that time, when the apostles had made the full confession of Christ, that he was the Son of God, he began to show them of his sufferings. He spake this to set right the mistakes of his disciples about the outward pomp and power of his kingdom.

Those that follow Christ, must not expect great or high things in this world. Peter would have Christ to dread suffering as much as he did; but we mistake, if we measure Christ's love and patience by our own.

The wisdom of the cross

1 Cor. 1:23

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

The gospel ever was, and ever will be, foolishness to all in the road to destruction. The message of Christ, plainly delivered, ever has been a sure touchstone by which men may learn what road they are travelling. But the despised doctrine of salvation by faith in a crucified Saviour, God in human nature, purchasing the church with his own blood, to save multitudes, even all that believe, from ignorance, delusion, and vice, has been blessed in every age.

And the weakest instruments God uses, are stronger in their effects, than the strongest men can use.

Not that there is foolishness or weakness in God, but what men consider as such, overcomes all their admired wisdom and strength.

The cross will never be emptied of its power.

1 Cor. 1:17

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Paul had been bred up in Jewish learning; but the plain preaching of a crucified Jesus, was more powerful than all the oratory and philosophy of the heathen world. This is the sum and substance of the gospel.

Christ crucified is the foundation of all our hopes, the fountain of all our joys.

Chapter 8

The stability of the cross

What we need today is a clear separation from the world. The only thing that can make a new creation is the power of the cross. At all times, we must keep the cross in view. An old time song we sometime sing.

When I survey the wondrous cross

When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God...

We should not serve sin.

Romans 6:6

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

The corrupt nature, called the old man, because derived from our first father Adam, is crucified with Christ, in every true believer, by the grace derived from the cross. It is weakened and in a dying state, though it yet struggles for life, and even for victory.

But the whole body of sin, whatever is not according to the holy law of God, must be done away, so that the believer may no more be the slave of sin, but live to God, and find happiness in his service.

Jesus has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

2 Peter 1:3-4

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Believers are free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:2

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Believers may be chastened of the Lord, but will not be condemned with the world. By their union with Christ through faith, they are thus secured.

What is the principle of their walk; the flesh or the Spirit, the old or the new nature, corruption or grace? For which of these do we make provision, by which are we governed? The unrenewed will is unable to keep any commandment fully.

And the law, besides outward duties, requires inward obedience. God showed abhorrence of sin by the sufferings of his Son in the flesh, that the believer's person might be pardoned and justified.

We sit together in heavenly places with Christ.

Ephes. 2:6

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Our faith, our conversion, and our eternal salvation, are not of works, lest any man should boast. These things are not brought to pass by any thing done by us, therefore all boasting is shut out.

All is the free gift of God, and the effect of being quickened by his power

Jesus has delivered us from the power of darkness.

Col. 1:13

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

All who are designed for heaven hereafter, are prepared for heaven now. Those who have the inheritance of sons, have the education of sons, and the disposition of sons. By faith in Christ they enjoyed this redemption, as the purchase of his atoning blood, whereby forgiveness of sins, and all other spiritual blessings were bestowed. Surely then we shall deem it a favour to be delivered from Satan's kingdom and brought into that of Christ, knowing that all trials will soon end, and that every believer will be found among those who come out of great tribulation.

In Christ, all things are made new.

2 Cor. 5:17

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

He is the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Though the same as a man, he is changed in his character and conduct. These words must and do mean more than an outward reformation.

The man who formerly saw no beauty in the Saviour that he should desire him, now loves him above all things. The heart of the unregenerate is filled with enmity against God, and God is justly offended with him. Yet there may be reconciliation. Our offended God has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.

Chapter 9

What Jesus accomplished for us on the cross.

John 15:15

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

All that love the Saviour should continue in their love to him, and take all occasions to show it. The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, but the joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a continual feast.

They are to show their love to him by keeping his commandments. If the same power that first shed abroad the love of Christ's in our hearts, did not keep us in that love, we should not long abide in it. Christ's love to us should direct us to love each other.

Jesus forever lives to make intercession.

Hebrews 7:25

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The better covenant brought the church and every believer into clearer light, more perfect liberty, and more abundant privileges. In the order of Aaron there was a multitude of priests, of high priests one after another; but in the priesthood of Christ there is only one and the same.

This is the believer's safety and happiness that this everlasting High Priest is able to save to the uttermost, in all times, in all cases. Surely then it becomes us to desire a spirituality and holiness, as much beyond those of the Old Testament believers, as our advantages exceed theirs.

God invites you to be a part of his family.

2 Cor. 6:18

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

We should not join in friendship and acquaintance with wicked men and unbelievers. Though we cannot wholly avoid seeing and hearing, and being with such, yet we should never choose them for friends. We must not defile ourselves by converse with those who defile themselves with sin.

Come out from the workers of iniquity, and separate from their vain and sinful pleasures and pursuits; from all conformity to the corruptions of this present evil world. If it be an envied privilege to be the son or daughter of an earthly prince, who can express the dignity and happiness of being sons and daughters of the Almighty?

The Holy Spirit will teach and bring all things to remembrance.

John 14:26

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

To all the saints, the Spirit of grace is given to be a remembrancer, and to him, by faith and prayer, we should commit the keeping of what we hear and know.

Peace is put for all good, and Christ has left us all that is really and truly good, all the promised good; peace of mind from our justification before God. This Christ calls his peace, for he is himself our Peace.

The peace of God widely differs from that of Pharisees or hypocrites, as is shown by its humbling and holy effects.

Jesus has triumphed over principalities and powers.

Col. 2:15

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

We have in Him the substance of all the shadows of the ceremonial law. All the defects of it are made up in the gospel of Christ, by his complete sacrifice for sin, and by the revelation of the will of God. To be complete, is to be furnished with all things necessary for salvation.

By this one word "complete," is shown that we have in Christ whatever is required. "In him," not when we look to Christ, as though he were distant from us, but we are in him, when, by the power of the Spirit, we have faith wrought in our hearts by the Spirit, and we are united to our Head.

The appearing of Christ abolished death and brought life.

2 Tim. 1:10

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

Those who cleave to the gospel, need not be ashamed, the cause will bear them out; but those who oppose it, shall be ashamed. The apostle had trusted his life, his soul, and eternal interests, to the Lord Jesus.

No one else could deliver and secure his soul through the trials of life and death. There is a day coming, when our souls will be inquired after. Thou hadst a soul committed to thee; how was it employed? In the service of sin, or in the service of Christ? The hope of the lowest real Christian rests on the same foundation as that of the great apostle

Chapter 10

God's light brings fellowship with one another.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

A message from the Lord Jesus, the Word of life, the eternal Word, we should all gladly receive. The great God should be represented to this dark world, as pure and perfect light. As this is the nature of God, his doctrines and precepts must be such.

And as his perfect happiness cannot be separated from his perfect holiness, so our happiness will be in proportion to our being made holy. To walk in darkness, is to live and act against religion.

God holds no heavenly fellowship or intercourse with unholy souls. There is no truth in their profession; their practice shows its folly and falsehood. The eternal Life, the eternal Son, put on flesh and blood, and died to wash us from our sins in his own blood, and procures for us the sacred influences by which sin is to be subdued more and more, till it is quite done away.

While the necessity of a holy walk is insisted upon, as the effect and evidence of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, the opposite error of self-righteous pride is guarded against with equal care.

Believing is the door.

John 20:31

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

There were other signs and proofs of our Lord's resurrection, but these were committed to writing, that all might believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Saviour of sinners, and the Son of God; that, by this faith, they might obtain eternal life, by his mercy, truth, and power.

May we believe that Jesus is the Christ, and believing may we have life through his name.

We live by faith in the Son of God.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Here, in his own person, the apostle describes the spiritual or hidden life of a believer. The old man is crucified, Rom 6:6, but the new man is living; sin is mortified, and grace is quickened. He has the comforts and the triumphs of grace; yet that grace is not from himself, but from another.

Believers see themselves living in a state of dependence on Christ. Hence it is, that though he lives in the flesh, yet he does not live after the flesh.

Those who have true faith, live by that faith; and faith fastens upon Christ's giving himself for us. He loved me, and gave himself for me. As if the apostle said, The Lord saw me fleeing from him more and more.

Such wickedness, error, and ignorance were in my will and understanding, that it was not possible for me to be ransomed by any other means than by such a price. Consider well this price. Here notice the false faith of many.

And their profession is accordingly; they have the form of godliness without the power of it. They think they believe the articles of faith aright, but they are deceived.

For to believe in Christ crucified, is not only to believe that he was crucified, but also to believe that I am crucified with him. And this is to know Christ crucified.

Christ showed in love for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:8

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

While the sinful state continues, God loathes the sinner, and the sinner loathes God, Zechariah 11:8. And that for such as these Christ should die, is a mystery; no other such an instance of love is known, so that it may well be the employment of eternity to adore and wonder at it. Again; what idea had the apostle when he supposed the case of some one dying for a righteous man?

And yet he only put it as a thing that might be. Was it not the undergoing this suffering, that the person intended to be benefitted might be released therefrom? But from what are believers in Christ released by his death? Not from bodily death; for that they all do and must endure.

Without taking up the cross, we are unworthy.

Matthew 10:38

And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

The strength shall be according to the day. And it is great encouragement to those who are doing Christ's work, that it is a work which shall certainly be done. See how the care of Providence extends to all creatures, even to the sparrows. This should silence all the fears of God's people; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

And the very hairs of your head are all numbered. This denotes the account God takes and keeps of his people. It is our duty, not only to believe in Christ, but to profess that faith, in suffering for him, when we are called to it, as well as in serving him.

That denial of Christ only is here meant which is persisted in, and that confession only can have the blessed recompense here promised, which is the real and constant language of faith and love.

Christ will lead us through sufferings, to glory with him. Those are best prepared for the life to come, that sit most loose to this present life. Though the kindness done to Christ's disciples be ever so small, yet if there be occasion for it, and ability to do no more, it shall be accepted.

Jesus, the perfecter of our faith is seated at God's right hand.

Hebrews 12:2

Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

The persevering obedience of faith in Christ, was the race set before the Hebrews, wherein they must either win the crown of glory, or have everlasting misery for their portion; and it is set before us. By the sin that does so easily beset us, understand that sin to which we are most prone, or to which we are most exposed, from habit, age, or circumstances.

This is a most important exhortation; for while a man's darling sin, be it what it will, remains unsubdued, it will hinder him from running the Christian race, as it takes from him every motive for running, and gives power to every discouragement.

Jesus was obedient even unto his death upon the cross.

Philippians 2:8

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

His human nature; herein he became like us in all things except sin. Thus low, of his own will, he stooped from the glory he had with the Father before the world was. Christ's two states, of humiliation and exaltation, are noticed. Christ not only took upon him the likeness and fashion, or form of a man, but of one in a low state; not appearing in splendor. His whole life was a life of poverty and suffering

The wages of sin is death.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The pleasure and profit of sin do not deserve to be called fruit. Sinners are but ploughing iniquity, sowing vanity, and reaping the same. Shame came into the world with sin, and is still the certain effect of it. The end of sin is death. Though the way may seem pleasant and inviting, yet it will be bitterness in the latter end.

If there is an active principle of true and growing grace, the end will be everlasting life; a very happy end! Though the way is up-hill, though it is narrow, thorny, and beset, yet everlasting life at the end of it is sure.

The gift of God is eternal life. And this gift is through Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ purchased it, prepared it, prepares us for it, preserves us to it; he is the All in all in our salvation.

There is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Believers may be chastened of the Lord, but will not be condemned with the world. By their union with Christ through faith, they are thus secured. What is the principle of their walk; the flesh or the Spirit, the old or the new nature, corruption or grace? For which of these do we make provision, by which are we governed?

We should be willing to lay down our lives for our brothers.

1 John 3:16

By this we know love that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

Here is the condescension, the miracle, the mystery of Divine love, that God would redeem the church with his own blood.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

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