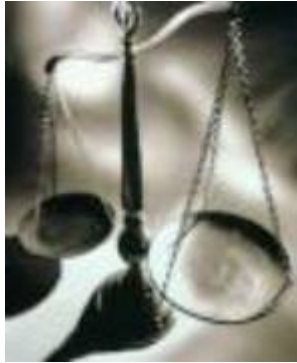


GOSPEL 'shorts'

Guilt



The following are in no particular order.

GUILT

1. There are no crimes if there is no law. However, there is an all-encompassing law of God and there are those who are guilty of breaking it (the whole human race).
2. There is no right and wrong if there is no God, only rules we make for ourselves, and who's to say they can impose those on others? But The fool says in his heart there is no God. Psalm 14.1
3. Losing one's temper is like burning down your house to kill a rat, it is self- defeating.
4. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4.8-10
5. It seems that the modern person is 'liberated' from everything but their own sins.
6. When we walk in this life without a thought for God we think that because we don't commit open sin that we walk in relative innocency. The reality is that we rob and cheat our way through life; stealing tithes and offerings, time, worship, service, energy, our whole lives from God. We love what we ought not to, in unfaithfulness to our Creator, detestable things, turning from God to idolatry and taking Him for granted.
7. Modern advances in DNA profiling have brought many criminals to justice after many years have elapsed.

The Day of Judgement will be the same, there will be no doubt and the judge is infallible.

8. Thoughts on God's fair justice (Balanced equations)

Sin + Punishment = Justice (balanced)

Man + Punishment = Justice (balanced)

Man + Forgiveness = Justice? (unbalanced)

Man + Punishment on sin-bearer + Forgiveness only for the = Justice

(balanced)

broken-hearted penitent man

The scales of God's justice must be balanced.

9. The wilful sinner: I'm afraid this man has determined to take himself all the way down that wide road to see where it would lead him. He has found a few deceitful pleasures along the way and he feels that there might be a crock of gold at the end. He also feels that this is his particular path and (though others may not tread it, and warn him of it) that he must walk it. However dear those besetting sins are, they are but false friends that lead the man to hell. At this point it would take a team of horses to turn the man's will, not even then. For he lives by experience and despises the living Word. But what is impossible with man is possible with God.

10. The conscience is sometimes the thing that hurts when all else feels good.

11. It is a sad thing sometimes to see people not wanting their children or their younger sisters or brothers to do the same things or go to the same places as they themselves have, thinking that it will corrupt them, while believing that they themselves have been strong enough to be immune from such effects. By the time they realise they're just as corrupt as the next man or woman it is, all too often, too late and they are ensnared by their own appetites and affections, and have largely become blind and desensitised.

12. Breaking the law of God is like a window having sins written upon it, and breaking it with a brick. You aim the brick at the sin you suppose you are only to be guilty of, but when the brick hits, the whole window is broken.

13. Some say, "It's not my fault, I've never had the opportunity to seek and find the Lord." Really?

The Bible tells us that men/women are wilfully ignorant of the Gospel and without excuse. The truth is, we are rebels and don't want God or His ways, we prefer the sins which shackle us in chains but which, we suppose, give us freedom and happiness- a deceitful presumption. Someone once said, and I think it true, 'Men want to find God like a thief wants to find a policeman!'

14. The unconverted souls of men and women misdirect their attentions constantly from what should have it to what shouldn't, making idols of each other. Therefore they buy clothes, furniture, carpets, kitchens, cars and houses etc in order to impress others, and allow themselves to be impressed when people do this to them. So people worship others and their possessions, all the time firmly taking their eye off the one true God who really is worthy of, and rightfully due, this worship.

15. We would live in a most uncertain world if the laws of nature (gravity etc) were not obeyed by nature itself. We wouldn't know what to expect next from the environment around us. Every day objects would be viewed with uncertainty and suspicion, even the ground we walked upon (if indeed we were able to!). The breaking of the moral law of God is just as fundamental, however man does this on a daily basis and therefore his world is uncertain, not knowing what evil might befall him next. If it were not for God's restraining hand we would live in absolute chaos and anarchy. He will demand an account. Our balance is way overdue. We owe a debt we cannot pay. It can be written off though. Take hold of the words of freedom in the Book of Truth, the Bible, and humbly cry out that the debt may be paid for you. For this is the only way to freedom reconciliation and a certain future.

16. In our sinful natures we've tried to shine a light of our own, instead of the true light that comes from God and the character He can give us. We've vaunted our fashions, our natural abilities, our 'wonderful personalities' etc- foolish pride! In this, the only light that shines is like a feeble candle lit from the very fires of hell.

17. The unconverted soul is a slave to sin. This person will do as they are tempted, the flame of desire being fanned into uncontrollable fire. What this person chooses to love consumes their thoughts and imaginations. What this person is tempted to do they'll think about, and what they think about they'll be doing before long. These desires come from the heart, which inclines towards wrongdoing.

- 18.** Christ and a crust is riches, but a wealthy king with a broken character is bankrupt.
- 19.** God never excuse sin, He never just overlooks it. Instead he deals with it. God punishes sin. The question is whether you will take the punishment (and be crushed forever) or Christ will (and bear it away).
- 20.** One of the deadliest of sins is PRIDE, makes you feel that you're always right.
- 21.** We see our sins as but a drop, but really they spread forth before us like a vast ocean. An ocean in which we are very likely to drown.
- 22.** You can hear it said on occasion, about a teenager who has got into some terrible moral trouble, "Oh, that person got in with the wrong crowd." But, I wonder, who these 'wrong crowd' are? Are they not just like everyone else, but we like to think they are always someone else. No doubt there are some worse than others, but it is human nature to see bad in others and ignore it in ourselves. "But, I would never do this or that" is the response. But it is foolish self-confidence to be so sure of human ability to keep free of sin, and even if you can avoid certain wrongs, there are ten thousand ways to snare a human and you can be sure we all have our particular transgressions. It is many a persons experience to become the sort of person they never thought they would. To imagine we are free from most sins is like plunging your hand into thick glue and then trying to remove it with the other, the more we try the worse it gets.
- 23.** As anyone who has had care over a child knows, if bad behaviour is not curbed, or our threats of punishment are not carried out, then the child grows bolder in his/her acts of rebellion. As people, we are the same against God. Our sin grows bolder as we grow older. God in His kindness will discipline His children who love Him, but those outside of the household of faith may be left unhindered for a while. But do not suppose that God's anger does not burn because in His mercy He holds back and at the same time offers a way of forgiveness. The wicked, who reject, will fall in God's time, the axe will cut that unfruitful tree down and it will be a swift blow.
- 24.** I wonder if we saw our sin in the minds eye as a provoking act of disrespect to God (as it certainly is), we might take it less lightly than we do, and would be more inclined to have things made right between Him and us. What if every sin we commit is like spitting in the face (Matt 27.30) of God, who holds us in His hand over a fire, like unclean refuse to be disposed of, repugnant in His sight. It would be reasonable for Him to drop us into the flame, but He waits, and we, well, we continue spitting, unaware of our true situation. Think on this, the saliva of our sin runs down the Saviours face, but still he holds you, but it will not be forever. He may speak to you now, but one day the pleading will stop. See yourself, unbeliever, in this and cry out for mercy before the hand is withdrawn and you drop.
- 25.** Rotten fruit is a picture for us of how our lives will turn out without God's forgiveness. All our natural youthful abilities can shine while we are young, but we can grow proud and our hearts hard. Just as bright and juicy fruit slowly becomes over ripe, and then starts to rot, so we, without God's intervening hand, will decay. We will still look and act similar, and we'll try to find satisfaction in our old sins but we will have become rotten and even our abilities and pleasures will drift out of reach. Just like an aging pop star who becomes nothing more than a parody of his or her former self, of which used to hold so much pride.
- 26.** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (hold down or suppress) the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Romans 1.20-21
- 27.** "All a man's ways seem innocent to him,

but motives are weighed by the LORD.” Proverbs 16.2

28. “...but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” Acts 17.30b-31

29. From ‘The Holy War’ by John Bunyan: Then Captain Conviction came forward and said, “O Mansoul, you were once famous for your innocence, but now you have degenerated into lies and deceit. It would be wise of you and for your happiness to accept the conditions of peace and mercy offered by the one against whom you have rebelled- one who has power to tear you to pieces- Shaddai our King. When he is angry, no one can stand before him. If you say you have not sinned or acted in rebellion against our King, your deeds will sufficiently testify against you. Why else did you hearken to the tyrant and receive him as your king? Why else did you take up arms and shut your gates against us, the faithful servants of the King?”

“Submit and accept the invitation. Do not let the time of mercy expire, but agree with your adversary quickly. Mansoul, do not allow yourself to be kept from mercy and to be run into a thousand miseries by the flattering schemes of Diabolus. Perhaps his lies may attempt to make you believe that we seek our own advantage in this matter. But it is obedience to our King and love for your happiness that is the reason for this undertaking of ours.

“Again I say to you, O Mansoul, consider if it is not amazing grace that Shaddai should humble himself like this. He reasons with you, using his message of entreaty and sweet persuasion, so that you will subject yourselves to him. Does he need you as much as you need him? No, no, but he is merciful and will not permit Mansoul to die. Turn to him and live.”

30. Have you heard the story of the prisoner who was released? On his release he was asked why he was not bitter about his long imprisonment. He replied, “Oh, I had been, but now I’ve been brought to see and I never forget who put me there in the first place.” Upon being asked who that was, the man replied, “ME!”

31. There is nowhere we can escape from God's searching gaze. Some portraits are painted in such a curious way or so lively pencilled that whichever way one turns the eyes are upon you. In the same way, whichever way we turn our hearts God's eye is upon us (Jer16.17)

I once heard of a girl whose father tragically died when she was fairly young. She used to keep a picture of him on her table but laid it face down at times of shame so that his eyes would not be upon her. However we cannot do this with God, even though we might like to. Shut up the Bible, don't step into the church, draw the curtains, but His eye is still there. We are prone to put the thought from our minds, but this is as foolish as stealing from a giant knowing he is in the very same room looking at all you do and averting your gaze and pretending he is not there!

There is only one way the condemning eye of the great Judge would, as it were, be shut to your guilt, and that is through the acceptance of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. If you despise this way, then you will own your guilt for eternity and that great eye of justice will burn into your very soul.

32. The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; we spend more on possessions, but have less substance; we buy more, but enjoy it less; are more entertained but less fulfilled. We have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, but less time; we have more experts, but more problems; more medicine but less wholeness. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often. We have learned how to make a living but not a life; we have added years to life, but not life to our years. We have been all the way to the moon and back but have trouble getting of the couch to church. We know more about the creation and less about the Creator. We have cleaned up the air but polluted the soul; we have split the atom, but not our love of sinning. We have higher incomes, but lower morals; we have become long on quantity, but short on quality.

These are the times of tall men and short character; steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the times of free love but expensive mistakes; more leisure, less joy; bigger supermarkets but

less nutrition, we feed our appetites but not our souls. These are the days of two incomes, and more divorce; liberation from everything including self control but not peer pressure; we see less wrongs taught in the classroom but more evils in society; more sex less responsibility; we permit everything except preaching; we call attempts to avoid families, family planning; relationships are the things you do more but get less good at. A time when technology can bring you this message & also open the devils eye to view ten thousand evils from men's hearts. A time when we've never needed to run to God more, but get on treadmills down the gym instead of walking to the house of prayer. A society of beauty parlours & treatments and ugly behaviour. A time when we pretend to be saved by heroes on the big screen but ignore the one in the Good Book.

33. White lime is a suitable illustration for the cleansing of sin. It makes a useful bleach. Our hearts need such cleansing, the lime of life is the application of the Spirit of God at conversion.

34. If Christ is not your sin bearer through saving knowledge, belief and trust in Him, then think not that because God holds back His hand of Justice, and that up until this time you have gone largely unpunished, that your sins will never be brought to account. God is Just and will give what is deserved. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

Every man must stand before the judgement seat of God and reap what they have sown in life. Our sins are like a great lake that has built up behind that great dam of God's forbearance. The level rises and rises behind the wall and you store up for yourself wrath for that day which will surely come, if God is true to Himself, when the dam will be breached and the deluge loosed upon the unpenitent.

35. The illustration of the pencil:- A person will make many mistakes in their life. None more serious than treating the sin, which pollutes our soul, lightly. Our condition is like the markings of a pencil on paper by an unruly child. If it were the drawing of a skilled artist or writer then the marks would work in line or letter to make up the page as it should be. But with the unruly child no sooner has the mark been made than a mistake also. He or she may try to correct it unsuccessfully, then scribble it out and all the time just making it worse, it looks worse now than it did at the beginning! What is needed is a skilful hand with some sort of eraser.

This is like man and his soul, it needs to be cleaned of its corruption and sinful condition and made new. This is only possible according to the Bible in Christ because of His nature and life of perfection culminating in that final act of perfect obedience with the atoning work on Calvary when He was taken in apparent weakness to become the sacrifice for needy men and women and to bear away their sins and cleanse them of their guilt. The person who accepts this personally through faith is now washed clean and has power over sin, the flow of sin is largely stemmed and new tastes and character are formed by God. The Christian is pronounced 'Not Guilty' by that Great Judge and needs only to daily go to his/her Saviour for the forgiveness needed, like daily cleaning the decks of a fully restored battle ship.

If we return to our initial illustration it is as if that sheet of paper had been miraculously made better than new, whiter than snow. Now the child is helped by his/her father to maturity, obedience and teachableness, given a new pencil with a rubber on the end, so his mistakes may be blotted out in future, and works towards a finished drawing or written page that brings glory to his/her father like a life now lived for God.

36. Why do we seem to be obsessed with crime as a nation, whether moral or civic? Popular culture is full of crime dramas, thrillers full of political corruption, cop shows, who dunnits. From Sherlock Holmes to crime scene investigation, from true crime documentaries to the world's worst police chases.

It seems to me that as men and women there is an inherent fascination with guilt, as if we all know that there is a great overriding 'law' that we are all under, which our conscience testifies to, and that we have all broken. We are linked by a common condition and it has to do with guilt, crime, punishment and innocence lost.

If you are curious to know more let me point you in the direction of revealed truth- The Holy Bible sits ready to set forth the case. The case of man and his God. The crime of rebellion and disloyalty. And the offer of clemency possible through an act of sacrifice.

37. "Don't blame yourself", often a good piece of advice at times of personal crisis, but is this a good piece of advice when it comes to a persons 'whole life', 'being' and 'human condition'?

The person far from God can become bitter & angry about their situation and at anyone and anything rather than him or herself (strangely enough, the one person who should share some of the blame, 'that enemy of souls' the Devil, never usually is blamed- showing his cloaking craftiness). God quite often is blamed, Christian people or Christian morality, other people or situations- ANYTHING - rather than laying the blame firmly & squarely at the feet of the real offender- That Person Themselves!

As one long term prison inmate said, (who was somewhat wiser at this point than when he was put in) when he was asked, " Why don't you ever give yourself over to bitterness & revenge?" he replied " Because I never lose sight of the person who put me here in the first place". When asked who that person was, he continued " he stares at me every morning in the mirror!".

The 'wrong' people do to us is nothing compared to the perilous danger we are in from our own actions. The blame lays firmly with us, accept this! Then, accept the deliverance, we all know what that is. God has, can and will deal with sin. He will lift these feelings and cause you to turn, we all struggle, but if you don't ask sincerely you'll never know that, and you'll always doubt. HOW DO I KNOW? Because I've known that same God to transform countless lives, people I know, people I've heard of, people down the rolling centuries of time; and always the same story told in different lives, a transformation from spiritual death to life, from crushing guilt to forgiveness, from a warring soul to peace with God. And always through the same means, that God-man and Saviour of souls Jesus Christ. The same story is mine too, and I write these things to testify to it.

38. I once saw a poignant Christian painting of an empty blood stained cross with only a note pinned to it, the note read 'PAID IN FULL'. The debt (caused by our sin) racked up in our name is incalculable but if we trust in the Lord as our sin bearer our debt before the one true Holy GOD is zero, amazing grace! It is good to ponder on such things often and to remember that our true repentance (which we are only brought to by God himself-through the Holy Spirit- anyway) would mean nothing unless there was a means for us to obtain redemption- namely Christ's death on Calvary when God the father poured out all the righteous judgement, due for sins committed by the elect (those chosen for salvation), onto Him instead of them. Sin must be paid for.

The question of guilt and wrong doing having to be paid for is an interesting one. Even we, as fallen humans, hold this truth in ourselves. When I was young, if I did something wrong my parents would punish me in some way. I would say, "I'll never do that again, I'm really sorry"- "I'm sure you are, but I still have to punish you", would come the reply, and rightly so. A Holy & just God must give the same answer if He is to remain Holy & Just. Sin must be punished, it is the right thing to do, it is just. If God did not do it He would no longer be the perfectly Just ruler of the universe, the people who the sins have been committed against would cry out for justice, the cry to God against that chief of sins 'murder', for example, has been described thus, 'the Blood cries out to Me from the ground to be avenged'. How does, on the one hand, a perfectly HOLY God, and on the other, a perfectly LOVING God, solve this problem? He finds a scape goat to sacrifice- thanks be to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. He has saved multitudes of condemned souls and the debt is paid through His blood.

39. There is a trouble with most people these days in grasping the reality of their sinfulness before God. This is largely due to the fact that they reside in a world which falsely justifies so much of what they do and who they are. Therefore they feel comfortable, for no one judges them and so they choose the world's ways. Security comes so often from being like the people that are around you. However, the blessed words 'security' and 'justification' are two words that should not be linked

with this fallen world's standards.

What if *everyone* was a hopeless drunkard and prostituted themselves freely? I venture to say even these poor wretched creatures would feel secure, for all around them did the same. I would even suggest the less depraved amongst them would feel self righteous, so deceitful is the heart! To a lesser extent (though not much lesser these days) may be the case with many today. They feel secure in their unbelief, their poor morals, their open rebellion against Gods ways because they are in the company of many. We all have a tendency to measure ourselves against other people, envying their position or lifestyle, coveting it for ourselves.

I would ask you a question though; What if the real measure is not other people but an over-arching law of God? Would you not pity the person who ran to be with the boisterous crowd, laughing and shouting and drifting down the wide street leading to the doomed city of Sodom, when the narrow pathway to the New Heavenly Jerusalem lays overgrown for lack of footfall!? If you choose the world's ways over God's then this is definitely your choice my dear reader. So may I humbly warn you as a man who was on the same road for years but was turned by a word of warning.

The devil loves 'mob mentality'. I recently heard a statement from an ex-soldier veteran of the conflict in Bosnia. He said that he saw terrible things done in that conflict by individuals who, to speak to, were 'ordinary' people', but as a collective group were capable of what can only be described as murder. He went on to say, "I cannot explain what that was, some would call it 'the Devil.'"

40. Trying to push your sins to the back of your mind and disregard your conscience is like throwing the evidence of a crime into a great lake. The perpetrator thinks it will never be discovered, because there is no tidal flow, and they would get away with the crime. However, recently one such lake was drained for a building development and all was laid bare, guns, knives, stolen bikes and cars etc.

This is how it is with a persons soul. We feel that as time goes by the 'sins of our youth' can be thrown into the lake of forgetfulness and therefore disappear, but all our sins are recorded and reserved for that day when we shall have to give account to Him who has power to throw a soul into hell.

There is one way, and only one, our sins can be treated as if forgotten. This is through the life and death of Jesus Christ who bore the sins of the many so that they may be numbered as the righteous. Will you be amongst that number, or will you continue to throw those sins to the back of your mind like that great lake? Unfortunately, it is also like an old store room, but we are storing up wrath if these things are not dealt with, for one day that room will be cleaned out and all will be uncovered. Your sins will then be thrust before you and you will be forced to pay the price for them yourself. A price no one can pay apart from Christ. Best accept Him now, rather than regret it then.

41. God Justifieth the Ungodly- Now, while this is very surprising, I want you to notice how available it makes the gospel to you and to me. If God justifieth the ungodly, then, dear friend, He can justify you. Is not that the very kind of person that you are? If you are unconverted at this moment, it is a very proper description of you; you have lived without God, you have been the reverse of godly; in one word, you have been and are ungodly. Perhaps you have not even attended a place of worship on Sunday, but have lived in disregard of God's day, and house, and Word - this proves you to have been ungodly. Sadder still, it may be you have even tried to doubt God's existence, and have gone the length of saying that you did so. You have lived on this fair earth, which is full of the tokens of God's presence, and all the while you have shut your eyes to the clear evidences of His power and Godhead. You have lived as if there were no God. Indeed, you would have been very pleased if you could have demonstrated to yourself to a certainty that there was no God whatever. Possibly you have lived a great many years in this way, so that you are now pretty well settled in your ways, and yet God is not in any of them. If you were labelled UNGODLY it would as well describe you as if the sea were to be labelled salt water. Would it not? Extract from

'All Of Grace' by C.H.Spurgeon

42. As the Lord clothes the flowers so must he clothe us. The flowers do not clothe themselves and spiritually neither must we. Our own righteousness is a poor covering. Only the rich multi-colours of Christ's garment of righteousness must you wear before God in order to cover your shame. Like the blind man (Mark 10.50), throw away the garment you cling to, it is worse than worthless, and instead lay hold on Christ the Saviour.

43. I have heard of a plane crash that was caused by pilot error after a mechanical malfunction. The problem would have been corrected and accounted for by the planes computer system, however the pilot in fear and panic wrestled with the controls to try to right the aircraft, thus not allowing the inbuilt safety remedy to work. His error was to think his contribution could save the plane, when really he should have left the work to the computer.

This is how it can be with a soul. Try to wrestle with the controls of your life instead of giving them over to the Lord will result in certain disaster.

44. The three crosses: Three Roman crosses stood on a hill. Three men hung crucified upon them. Two thieves and one perfect. The two thieves revile and mock the perfect one. Then as time went on one thief is brought to see his only hope is to turn to the perfect one for salvation of soul. The other thief remains as hard hearted and blind to the truth as ever and died despising the one who deserved his honour but received his spite, the one who in life he had hung next to, but who, spiritually, he was 10,000 miles away from.

Our lives are not our own, they should be lived for God, however we all have been thieves, stealing our lives from God. There were two men either side of the Lord, which man are you?

45. If you know these two things- yourself a sinner and Christ a Saviour- you are a scholar enough to go to heaven. C.H.Spurgeon

46. You and your sins must part, or God and you cannot be friends. Either give up sin or give up hope. C.H.Surgeon.

47. I recently came across this story in the news:- 'The feeling of being watched makes people act more honestly, even if the eyes are not real, a study suggests.

A Newcastle University team monitored how much money people put in a canteen "honesty box" when buying a drink.

They found people put nearly three times as much in when a poster of a pair of eyes was put above the box than when the poster showed flowers.'

Psalm 33:13

The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.

Isaiah 29:15

Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

Romans 3:20

Therefore by the deeds of the law (of God) there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Galatians 3:24

24Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

(It teaches us that we are sinners and therefore need a free salvation from God through faith in

Christ Jesus.)

48. If God is there, as you sense he is, and therefore is the creator and sustainers of all things and has been witness to all things seen and unseen, every little thought and action of men from day one. If he is, therefore, the perfect and just ruler and law giver and provider of man's moral sense, would he not be just like the God of the Bible? When we think about it wouldn't a perfect God have to act just like he does in the Bible against mankind? Would he not be angry at the sins of mankind, when we ourselves, which only see limited things in comparison, can see the wrong that man does? Is not the Bible true? God has seen and recorded all we've ever done and thought. It's been recorded and noted from every angle in every possible way, and written as if in stone. We may be able to hide our hearts and actions from men, but on the day of judgement all will be plain and laid bare! Oh, do we not need a Saviour? What will happen when we have to give account? Do we expect to go to heaven and dwell amongst the angels? But without a Saviour and in an unforgiven state we are not fit for heaven, and we are most assuredly accountable for our sins before the perfect judge of the universe.

It would be unfitting for a crooked, immoral thief to dwell with a good prince or King, would it not? If you can see this, then how can you not see that, more so, a mortal man still in his natural state and condition cannot and must not dwell with God and His angels! A change must be sought, a conversion take place.

49. For God to let 'unwashed' sinners into heaven is like letting sewage into a reservoir. Remember then, that the Bible makes it clear, all men and women are sinners. The deeds of men are like a great heap of sin in that city of the world 'Babylon', and as time goes like an hour glass the heap will grow higher and higher until it reaches the heavens and God will say 'No More!'. And Babylon the great will be judged with all in her, all those who fed on her delicacies and were polluted by her plagues. The sea of nations will mourn and wail because the world will be judged and pass away with all those in them because of their works. But there is the Lamb's book of life and if you come out of Babylon now and partake no more, your name will be written there and that Great city the New Jerusalem will be your home, where there is no more sin, sorrow or death.

50. There is no chastening in heaven, but there is also no chastening in hell. Not in heaven for there is no sin. Not in hell for there is no amendment. Where there is life, there is hope. But not hereafter. Let God's chastening hand rouse you from your sleep and turn to Him, it is a kindness.

51. Modern man can treat sport with the seriousness with which he should treat life, and life with the apathy with which he should treat sport!

52. The heart of man must be changed and moulded if it is to know God, and it is God himself who does the work. It is as if a metal worker melts the iron to mould it into the right shape. Without the fire's of the Gospel, and the hammer of the convicting work of the Spirit of regeneration, a heart can never be changed and will remain as hard as iron.

53. Two men had a dispute and took it to a king. The dispute was concerning whether a man could be taught to be a gentleman or not, therefore overcoming the man's nature. One man said yes, the other no. To illustrate, the first man produced a cat that had been trained to walk upright with a tray of drinks. The other man then produced some mice- the cat soon reverted to type! Thus, the second man proved his point. This is a fitting illustration of the intransient quality of human nature, which is inherently sinful. Only God can overcome it.

54. Grace is being given what we do not deserve. Mercy is not being given what we do deserve.

55. *God is light illustration* A woman who had lived all her life in a village recounted when electricity had come to the village. She was a clean woman but when they wired up the house and switched on the lights she couldn't believe how dirty her house was. Our spiritual state and condition is invariably worse than we think.

56. It is common that people when asked about their moral condition will reply, 'I'm not perfect,

but I'm not a bad person.' This is like a man who makes a self-portrait, but flatters himself. This is indicative of how good we think we are, compared with our actual condition. (avatars- often these virtual representations are gross exaggerations of the truth.)

57. Q. Where is it that the spirit of Man finds itself dead on arrival? (EARTH)

Q. What is the only appetite that, if you feed it, the more hungry it gets? (LUST)

Q. What is the only appetite that, if you starve it, the hunger diminishes? (LUST)

58. Often a guilty man will blame everybody and everything apart from himself. Most people in their spiritual pride consider themselves good people that have done some bad things. However the truth according to the Bible is that there are only bad people who have done some 'good' things. These 'righteous' things are seen in the Bible as a picture. The picture is of clothing, of nakedness or of shame. It would be quite wrong and disrespectful for us to attend someone's wedding barely dressed in smelly rags, having not washed for months. This is how God sees our 'good' works. The truth is that if we think we are good people and acceptable before God as we are, then we reject Christ who offers us His righteousness in order to be acceptably clothed before God the King of kings. This is presumptuous sin of the worst degree.

59. "I know my rights!" cried the man proudly. The policeman calmly replied, "You may know your rights but do you know your wrongs!"

This is the problem between men and God. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

60. 'Mercy' is not getting what you deserve.

'Grace' is getting what you don't deserve.

61. I've heard that in Victorian London, the 'street food' could be rather 'suspect'. One practice was to cover rotten meat with fresh meat in order to sell it!

This is what it is like to try to present ourselves before God in our guilt and sinfulness. We will be no more acceptable than that rotten meat.

62. There was once a son who rebelled from his parents and greatly offended them. He became estranged from them and in the end wound up in prison. As he became aware of his sorrowful state and condition, he decided to seek to reconcile himself to his parents. He wrote a letter to them, not knowing whether they were at the same address or, if indeed, they were still alive. In this, he stated that he was truly repentant and knew that he didn't deserve their forgiveness, but that, if it was at all possible, could he be forgiven and come home. As a sign he asked, if he was forgiven, could they tie a handkerchief around the old pear tree at the bottom of the garden.

The day of his return had arrived and he was very apprehensive. As he came into town on the train, the memories started flooding back. The fields he had grown up playing in, his street, then closer, his neighbours house, then his own. Afraid, he looked over the fence into the garden, but there was no handkerchief tied to the pear tree. Instead, there were many tea towels and pillowcases and tablecloths and bed sheets tied to it! FORGIVENESS, FORGIVENESS, FORGIVENESS! His heart jumped and he knocked on the door with tears in his eyes. It was opened and his parents hugged him with joy hardly recognising him. But he knew them, and there was great celebration.

This is how it is with God, and his readiness to forgive and receive all who would humbly return to him.

63. The Law is a stick to drive us to Christ. When we are there and in Him, the stick is given to us

as a staff that we can use to walk with (Martin Luther).

64. The Law sends us to Christ for justification.

Christ sends us back to the Law for sanctification.

65. If we shed no tears of repentance, in time we will go to that place of endless tears, for eternity. But if we shed tears of repentance in this life, then in time we will go to that place where there are no more tears- Heaven itself.

66. There is nowhere we can escape from God's searching gaze. Some portraits are painted in such a curious way or so lively pencilled that whichever way one turns the eyes are upon you. In the same way, whichever way we turn our hearts God's eye is upon us (Jer16.17)

I once heard of a girl whose father tragically died when she was fairly young. She used to keep a picture of him on her table but laid it face down at times of shame so that his eyes would not be upon her. However we cannot do this with God, even though we might like to. Shut up the Bible, don't step into the church, draw the curtains, but His eye is still there. We are prone to put the thought from our minds, but this is as foolish as stealing from a giant knowing he is in the very same room looking at all you do and averting your gaze and pretending he is not there!

There is only one way the condemning eye of the great Judge would, as it were, be shut to your guilt, and that is through the acceptance of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. If you despise this way, then you will own your guilt for eternity and that great eye of justice will burn into your very soul.

I recently came across this story in the news:- 'The feeling of being watched makes people act more honestly, even if the eyes are not real, a study suggests.

A Newcastle University team monitored how much money people put in a canteen "honesty box" when buying a drink.

They found people put nearly three times as much in when a poster of a pair of eyes was put above the box than when the poster showed flowers.'

Psalm 33:13

The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.

Isaiah 29:15

Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

Romans 3:20

Therefore by the deeds of the law (of God) there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Galatians 3:24

24Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

(It teaches us that we are sinners and therefore need a free salvation from God through faith in Christ Jesus.)

67. The illustration of the pencil:- A person will make many mistakes in their life. None more serious than treating the sin, which pollutes our soul, lightly. Our condition is like the markings of a pencil on paper by an unruly child. If it were the drawing of a skilled artist or writer then the marks

would work in line or letter to make up the page as it should be. But with the unruly child no sooner has the mark been made than a mistake also. He or she may try to correct it unsuccessfully, then scribble it out and all the time just making it worse, it looks worse now than it did at the beginning! What is needed is a skilful hand with some sort of eraser.

This is like man and his soul, it needs to be cleaned of its corruption and sinful condition and made new. This is only possible according to the Bible in Christ because of His nature and life of perfection culminating in that final act of perfect obedience with the atoning work on Calvary when He was taken in apparent weakness to become the sacrifice for needy men and women and to bear away their sins and cleanse them of their guilt. The person who accepts this personally through faith is now washed clean and has power over sin, the flow of sin is largely stemmed and new tastes and character are formed by God. The Christian is pronounced 'Not Guilty' by that Great Judge and needs only to daily go to his/her Saviour for the forgiveness needed, like daily cleaning the decks of a fully restored battle ship.

If we return to our initial illustration it is as if that sheet of paper had been miraculously made better than new, whiter than snow. Now the child is helped by his/her father to maturity, obedience and teachableness, given a new pencil with a rubber on the end, so his mistakes may be blotted out in future, and works towards a finished drawing or written page that brings glory to his/her father like a life now lived for God

68. Trying to push your sins to the back of your mind and disregard your conscience is like throwing the evidence of a crime into a great lake. The perpetrator thinks it will never be discovered, because there is no tidal flow, and they would get away with the crime. However, recently one such lake was drained for a building development and all was laid bare, guns, knives, stolen bikes and cars etc.

This is how it is with a persons soul. We feel that as time goes by the 'sins of our youth' can be thrown into the lake of forgetfulness and therefore disappear, but all our sins are recorded and reserved for that day when we shall have to give account to Him who has power to throw a soul into hell.

There is one way, and only one, our sins can be treated as if forgotten. This is through the life and death of Jesus Christ who bore the sins of the many so that they may be numbered as the righteous. Will you be amongst that number, or will you continue to throw those sins to the back of your mind like that great lake? Unfortunately, it is also like an old store room, but we are storing up wrath if these things are not dealt with, for one day that room will be cleaned out and all will be uncovered. Your sins will then be thrust before you and you will be forced to pay the price for them yourself. A price no one can pay apart from Christ. Best accept Him now, rather than regret it then.

69. The law is like a mirror. It can show us all our faults and sins but it cannot take them away.

70. Tolstoy told a story. He said a man can have as much land as he can walk around. He greedily walks around a huge piece but dies before he can complete its circumference. Now he only owns six feet of land.

71. Recently I heard the testimony from a man given the task of searching for a world war two war criminal known to have murdered hundreds in the concentration camps. When asked 'He is now 94, shouldn't he be left alone?' He answered, 'The passage of time in no way diminishes his guilt.' The is the same with God, how will a person ever pay the price of breaking God's laws. How will a man ever remove his guilt?*Insert Bible verse here*

72. Those whom the Lord does not use are very apt to be seized by another and turned to his evil purposes. Those who are not working bees usually turn into dead flies and spoil the sweetest ointments by the potful at a time. May no one in our church since into such a condition. Far rather may we be so blessed as to become a blessing to all around. Spurgeon

73. The difference between the godly and the wicked: the godly fear God and sin not; the wicked sin and fear not.

74. To think that we are defined by our sins is a great mistake. Far from defining who we are they distort and pervert who we should be.