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“JESUS SAVES” - Or DOES HE?

By: S.C. Phillips

“Who HATH saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus BEFORE the world began,” - II Timothy 1:9

From sophisticated church bulletin boards, to roadside crucifixes, bumper stickers, and bathroom walls; from coast to coast, and from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, one is bombarded with the slogan, “Jesus Saves.” It is so evident that hardly anyone takes notice of it, or seemingly is affected by it.

But the subtlety of the slogan is deceiving. It is unseen, yet subconsciously perceived and mentally set. Even if it is not found in the Scriptures, it still *must* be true. Like the mythical “Santa Claus,” it just must be so, for, it is instilled in the total fabric of the culture and in America’s modern concept of religion. Surely no one, not even The Predestinarian, would dare assault this “sacred cow.”

The intent of the slogan “Jesus saves” is designed as most of the slogans designed by the anti-christ) to instill false conceptions and to deceive the unwary natural religionist. It assaults the basic doctrine of Christ — which we will endeavor to prove. As with other slogans, it is a part of the world’s propaganda technique to discredit free grace and the plenary sacrifice of Christ’s redemptive work.

Examples of other such slogans are: “Give God a chance,” — as if to say that the wicked should not be unsportsmanlike; that he should be fair enough to allow God at least an equal opportunity (or a “handicap”) in the game of chance salvation! Again, “crusade for Christ,”— as if the God of righteousness

utilizes the bloody and horrible instruments of the Inquisition to compel men to be evangelized. Or, "Let God save you," — as if He is a helpless, frustrated, and defeated God before the stout hearts of the almighty wicked freewillier; or that He is a beggar before the door of man's corrupt heart. As a famous modernist theologian once said: "Hell is a ghastly monument to the failure of the triune God" — that is the stuff slogans are made of!

The slogan "Jesus saves" is an assault made upon the glory of Christ's finished salvation. To any who may not have noticed the basic subtlety of the slogan, never once in the Scriptures is Jesus presented in the work of salvation in the present tense of the verb "save.~ Just as the word "salvation" never has an "5" following it; neither does "save". Rather, His work is, after its accomplishment on the tree, always presented in the past tense as "saved." - "*Who hath **SAVED** us, and called us.*"

Not only is this true, but it follows doctrinal consistency in the work of the Godhead in our salvation. It was the Father who hath "*chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.*" (Eph. 1:4) It was in Christ, the Son of God, that the Father "*reconciled us by the death of His Son;*" and "*being reconciled we shall be **SAVED** by His life.*" (Rom. 5:10) It was about two thousand years ago when God reconciled (past tense) us by the death of His Son, thus saving us by answering the full legal requirements of the holy law of God, and saving us **THEN** from the penalty and "curse of the law." Today, it is the Holy Spirit who calls us "with a holy calling" and that, not according to our own works, or cooperation, but according to God's own purpose and grace which the Father gave us in Christ before He created the world. Thus, the true and precise doctrine is "Jesus

SAVED." (Past tense)

In this writer's escape from mystery Babylon's freewill darkness, the experiential path was from freewillism to Calvinism, and then to experimental free grace. In the Arminian (freewill) camp, the major theme was: "Jesus saves," - if you let Him, of course. In Calvinism, there was but little difference. There, too, we often heard such statements as: "I was saved in 1956," or, "My husband isn't saved." Often they also button-hole someone with: "Are you saved?" etc. These statements, although extremely important, still imply that "Jesus *now* saves" —if you'll let Him. They betray their misconception that salvation *commences* in effectual calling and regeneration. This certainly is inconsistent with the doctrine of Christ, with true Calvinism, and with experiential heart-religion. Salvation **COMMENCED WITH GOD**, and that **BEFORE** He created puny little man. (See Rom. 8:28-33;& Eph. 1:3.12) Effectual calling and regeneration, the gracious work of the Holy Spirit, is based upon and effectual through Christ's redemptive work. His work was completed on the cross, and He said: "*It is finished.*" (John 4:34, 5:36; 19:30 inclusive.)

Specifically, there is no way one can truly and knowingly say "My husband isn't saved," for he may well be included in the glorious redemption of Jesus Christ, who actively in His life, and passively in His death, redeemed all His people from **ALL** their sins. Merely because he has not yet been effectually called by the Holy Spirit, does not in the least imply he was left out of the covenant of redeeming grace. As finite (and often arrogant) creatures, we do not possess sufficient knowledge of the fullness of the redemptive work of Christ so as to "judge righteously" whether Christ died

for, and saved, this one or another. Indeed, millions who “know they are saved” may not be in that electing covenant, and thus partakers of His election. They may only be called to a profession by the Gospel, “*for many are called, but few be chosen.*” While we, as creatures, cannot know who is, or is not, saved, “*The foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth them that are His.*” (II Tim. 2:19) This should cause us to act towards those that are without as if they were objects of mercy yet to be made known. Harsh creature judgments are exceedingly severe and ungracious; and are a hindrance to a good hope in the salvation of loved ones. In fact, it is a sure way to create strife, hardness, and bitterness towards the truth of God unnecessarily.

Again, one will search the Scriptures in vain to find an instance where any minister or individual ever pried into the secret counsel of God by asking another “Are you saved?” The reason appears clear: *That is the specific ministry of the Holy Spirit, who is sent into the world, “And when He is come, HE WILL reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”* (John 16:8) It is certain that if He does not, we shall not! Such an inquiry is inconsistent with the doctrine of particular redemption, of the total depravity of man, of Holy Spirit regeneration, and of the necessity that one be born from above. If the one quizzed answered “no,” it is evident by the above doctrines that there is absolutely nothing he can do about it. He cannot quicken himself to life from above. He cannot *born* himself again, no more than he did the first time. He cannot include himself in the number of God’s purchased possession. He cannot truly believe the Gospel, nor evangelically repent of himself. And certainly, he cannot advance or hinder God’s salvation

in his own behalf. If he could do these things, then Christ need not have died; nor would salvation be by grace. The question is strictly an Arminian freewill approach. The question exposes the doctrinal ignorance of the inquirer and demonstrates more zeal than knowledge.

Salvation is much more comprehensive than many people seem to realize. It certainly transcends all the little humanly devised “plans of salvation.” In a purposeful manner, all God’s people were “saved” in the covenant of grace by divine election. That is, they were objects of God’s particular and everlasting love even before the foundation of the world. (Jer. 3 1:3) They were by election given to the eternal Son of God, and thus *in this sense*, were saved from perdition. By that divine choice, they were never numbered with the “*sons of perdition*” such as Judas. (See John 17:12; Philippians 1:28; II Thess 2:3; I Tim. 6:9; Heb. 10:39; II Peter 3:7; and Rev. 17:8, 11) From eternal election, they were *sanctified by God the Father, and PRESERVED in Jesus Christ.*” (Jude 1) As our text states: They were both **SAVED** and **CALLED** according to God’s own “purpose and grace,” and this “before the world began.” It should be noted that, in the text, “saved” precedes “called.” That is, the whole number of God’s elect are as saved and safe **IN** Christ by divine election in the purpose of God, as though they were in fact already in the presence of eternal glory.

However, a warning ought to be sounded here. It is not Scripturally proper to refer to divine election as “being saved,” for to do so neglects the proper emphasis which must be ascribed to the Saviour in His redemptive work. This would equally be as erroneous, it seems, as saying that “Jesus saves” now. For surely nothing can excel the glorious display of the love of Christ than his sacrifice for His

people's salvation, indeed, the central theme of the Gospel is the meritorious and sacrificial work of Christ for them. That is the "*Glad tidings of salvation*" to any who have been given faith to believe that He died for them.

It is in the active and passive obedience of Christ that salvation is *judicially*, or legally, accomplished. This, we believe, is what is meant when it is written, "*In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*" (Eph. 1:7) Now we have that, not as of *when* we believed, but as of the acceptance of His offering by the Father; which was when He "*through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God.*" (Heb. 9:14) Why? Because, "*by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*" (Heb. 10:14)

None will dispute that Scripture repeatedly refers to the redemptive office of Jesus as "*the Saviour,*" which certainly places His work as the lone cause of salvation. The enunciation of the angel to the shepherds, in part, was "*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord.*" (Luke 2:11) His message and promise to Joseph was, "*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.*" (Matt. 1:21) When the Holy Ghost was upon Simeon, he praised God and testified, saying, "*for mine eyes have seen THY SALVATION.*" (Luke 2:30). To her cousin Elizabeth, the mother of Jesus declared, "*My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God MY SAVIOUR.*" (Luke 1:47)

To deny the work of our Lord in salvation, or to imply that He merely made an uncertain provision for it, is to deny Him as **THE** Saviour of sinners. In fact, the whole

Arminian freewill world insists that it is the preachers and soul-winners that do the saving. Furthermore, to teach that He did not actually accomplish the end for which He came, is to declare Him a failure in the endeavor; this too, negates Jesus as the Saviour of sinners by such that hold this concept. The declaration by Christ of His role in salvation was, "*For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of ALL which HE HATH GIVEN ME I should lose NOTHING, but raise it up again at the last day.*" (John 6:38-39) This being so, if He failed here, then He failed altogether, and is not a savior.

Perhaps some of the confusion over the above view of salvation as a finished work of Christ in His redemptive work may be because the Scripture does not identify single identifiable components of His work with the word "saved." This, we believe, is because redemption, reconciliation, ransom, suretyship, propitiation, etc., are in reality the affects and purpose of **ONE WORK** - salvation. We, as finite creatures, subdivide large concepts to better understand them. Surely the Lord need not do so. Nevertheless, it was by *that work* that He, as the federal head of His people, judicially saved them *before* He called them; and in fact, before most of those of the Gospel dispensation had even been born.

May we indulge your logic? If Christ did not save one by His particular redemption, must this one then believe that Christ died for him in order to be saved? If so, would he not be required to believe a lie in order to be saved? Conversely, if Christ died for one, is it not faith which lays hold upon this accomplishment of Christ which delivers him in conversion? In other words, it must *first* be

true, *before* it can be truly believed! Belief on Christ is given only to those **IN** Christ Jesus. We can understand this when we consider that Christ's redemptive work was completed, or finished, by Him two thousand years ago, while most of His elect in this dispensation were not yet born. As prophesied, "*And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore HIS ARM BROUGHT salvation unto him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him.*" (Isa. 59:16)

Redemption speaks of slaves, even as ransom speaks of captives. Redemption always must be accomplished by the owner, and by him only. Before an object can be redeemed the holder requires proof of ownership. Thus, election to salvation gives Christ the "right of redemption." It does **NOT** give ministers and soul-winners such a right! If a slave is redeemed, he is saved from bondage, and this is a *legal act*. So we see that Christ *legally saved His people* when He redeemed them by His blood. However, the word "saved," as used in the New Testament, most often refers to the deliverance of quickened sinners to Gospel conversion. But even here, the Scripture never uses the word "**saves**" in the present tense. Why? Because, until it is done, it cannot be known! It is not an instantaneous and single act as most nominal believers suppose. Conversion takes place at an appointed time, in the quickening of regeneration, as the sinner struggles to be delivered from sin's awful bondage. In the process of deliverance, there is a dying to sin, the law, and the mammon of self-confidence. The sinner is emptied of himself, and of all false hopes of deliverance by his own efforts. He is brought to resignation; and godly sorrow worketh repentance. (II Cor. 7:10) It is the goodness of God that leadeth him to

repentance, (Rom. 2:4) and this repentance to life God must *grant* as an act of grace and mercy. (Acts 11:18) So too, faith, which is bound up in conversion, is a "*gift of God.*" (Eph. 2:10-11) Sanctification is by the Spirit and through belief of the truth. All these things, and a great deal more, are included in "salvation."

Those things which commence with the Holy Spirit's quickening of a sinner become experiential knowledge of the Lord's dealings with the soul. Those things which precede this experimental are *finished* in Christ's obedience and work. The satisfactory answering of the judicial claims of the law of God against the sinner is Christ's work in salvation. It is always past tense. The experiential work is by the Holy Spirit, and while it does cover a period of time, it is never acknowledged in the Scripture until it, too, is past. Thus, we believe, it is wrong to say that "Jesus saves;" rather, it is true to say "**Jesus saved.**"

PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS

By R.O. Simmons

I believe in predestination of all things. We admit we find difficulties in the doctrine of predestination of all things, and we also find God's foreknowledge of all things embraced by the same difficulties. If we hold to the foreknowledge of all things, and deny the predestination of all things we become lost in the fog of Arminian doctrine.

We can't see how the foreknowledge of a thing can exist when it has not been determined that the thing foreknown shall ever exist. Neither can we see how a thing will take place, can be foreknown unless the

time for its occurrence be fixed or determined by someone. To fix, establish, determine all events is what I believe to be called predestination, and to me it is the only certain basis of foreknowledge. All things must be determined in order to establish their certainty and thereby establish the certain foreknowledge of them.

We do not believe that predestination means to *cause, force, or influence*. If predestination is the cause which brings about events, then there was no need for the death of Christ. His people were predestinated to the adoption of children, and to be conformed to the image of Christ. If predestination is the cause which produces the end predestined, then the death of Christ to redeem, and the operation of God's Spirit to change us to the image of Christ was not necessary at all - predestination would have done the work. Now, if we will find what those wicked men were gathered together to do, then we will know what God's hand and counsel had determined before to be done. (Acts 4:26-28) We do not believe that predestination caused those wicked men to do what they did, and do not believe that predestination would be the cause of any other crime. We also know from reading the Scripture that God did predetermine or predestinate what those men did, and we do confess that they did wickedly. We do acknowledge that God can predestinate a thing and God not be the author of sin nor his predestination the cause. We know that these men were gathered together to kill the Blessed Son of God and were gathered to do whatsoever God's hand and counsel had determined before to be done. Then, we feel sure that God let or allowed sin to enter into the world when He could just as easily have prevented, or not allowed it to occur. He either allowed it by purpose or allowed it

without purpose. If by purpose, then the predestination of it is established. If without purpose, then He was surely ignorant of its coming or was powerless to prevent it. We know that God is **ALL WISE** and **ALL POWERFUL**.

The Bible says, "Every man at his best state is vanity," and also that the "creature was made subject to vanity." Job says, "Is there not an appointed time to man upon the earth?"; for we know that when sin is finished, it bringeth forth death; for the wages of sin is death. It seems to me that it would be of more comfort to God's people to believe He has established the certainty of all things in His determinate counsel. For the Lord reigneth in heaven, in earth, in seas, and in all deep places and doth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, what doest thou?

As we stated in the beginning of this article, we believe that for *foreknew* all things and also that God *predestinated* all things. Some who say they are Baptists say that God predestinated the good things but not the bad things. They will say that they believe that God foreknew all things. We believe that if God's predestination is limited then His foreknowledge is also limited. Surely if *we limit one, we must limit the other*.

We believe it is true that all men were not foreknown as His covenant people, nor were all men predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. But, we believe that they were foreknown as His creatures and surely God must have had a purpose in creating them. We believe that every man and every other creature will fulfill the purpose which God has purposed they should, and God determined the disposition of them all before He made them. "For *whom He did foreknow*,

He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.” Those whom God foreknew as His covenant people, His elect children, them He also did predestinate (or decree, determine) to be conformed to the image of His Son. Those whom God has foreknown as His elect people, them He has also predestinated to be made like His dear Son. When Christ shall come to gather His Bride at the end, He shall have kept all that the Father has given Him.

We believe that God’s attitude toward sin is quite different from His attitude toward righteousness. For example, God was pleased with Solomon’s request for an understanding heart to judge His people, who were a chosen and great people. And Solomon felt to be but a child and knew not how to go out or come in. (I Kings 3:10) And the speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing. God said unto him, *“Because thou has asked this thing and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast thou asked riches for thyself nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment, behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour; so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all the days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways to keep my statutes and my judgments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.”*

Solomon’s understanding and wise heart, also his riches and honour were *sure and certain*, but the lengthening of his days was based upon Solomon’s keeping God’s statutes and His commandments and walking in His

ways. We feel sure that God had foreknown just what Solomon’s speech would be and had also predestinated, determined, and fixed every word and the desire of his heart. We also find in the eleventh chapter of First Kings where Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord. King Solomon loved many strange women of the nations which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, *“Ye shall not go in unto them; neither shall they come in unto you for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.”* Solomon gave unto these in love, for it came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God.

We see that God was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, and he kept not that which the Lord commanded. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, *“Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee.”* We are sure that God had foreknown that Solomon would love many strange women and not keep His covenant nor His statutes and commandments and that his heart would be turned away after other gods. And just as surely as God foreknew all these events, He just as surely predestinated them. We can’t see how the foreknowledge of these things could have occurred except that it had been determined that the thing should exist. We believe that every event foreknown has a fixed time for its occurrence and also must be determined by someone. We say emphatically that we do **NOT** believe that God’s predestination *caused* Solomon’s heart to be turned away after other gods, neither did it cause Solomon

not to walk in God's ways, nor did it cause him not to keep the statutes and commandments; but the many *strange women* Solomon loved, his wives, *turned away Solomon's heart* after other gods. James says, "*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*" Solomon was drawn away by his own lust and enticed by his wives.

Did not David say unto God, "*I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing?*" Was it not David that commanded the people of Israel to be numbered after Satan provoked him? We are sure that God foreknew that David would command Joab, the captain of the host, to number the people. God had also predestinated that David would do this evil deed. For David said, "*Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered, even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed.*" We believe God had foreknown and also determined the very number of the people that Joab gave unto David. We are sure that neither God's foreknowledge nor His predestination caused David to sin and do evil in numbering the children of Israel. For *it was Satan* who stood up against Israel *and provoked David to do this thing*. Then we can see and must say that it was *Satan who caused David to sin and do evil*. Sin is an act of the creature. God does not cause us to sin, but neither is He blind to our sins, nor does He approve; yet He knows us for vain creatures we are, and has known us since before the foundation of the world. When we sin, we are not surprising God, for He has already foreknown or predestinated what we would do in lust. He knows our every thought before we have thought it.

Primitive Baptists are sometimes called "can't help its," but I hope no person professing to be a Primitive Baptist would apply this to excuse his sins by saying, "God predestinated it, and I couldn't help it!" Yes, it is true, God predestinated or knew we would sin, but the predestination did not cause us to sin, for Satan stands up and provokes one to sin, and the character provoked is drawn away by *his own lusts*.

Brethren, there are many, many more examples we recall concerning God's predestination and foreknowledge, but I feel surely that the things we have mentioned here express clearly our views on this great subject and establishes that although God *predestinates* (to ordain or appoint beforehand) and *fore knows* (knowledge of an event to take place beforehand) *all things*, He does not *cause men to sin*.

May God bless us in Truth.

LIVING FAITH vs. DEAD FAITH

By Gilbert Beebe, 1843

Living faith invariably proceeds from a living source, and can never emanate from the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (Rom 8:7, 8) All men are by nature carnal, the whole fountain of the heart is corrupt, all the intellectual powers of man are corrupt, the thoughts of his heart are evil, and that continually: however we may manage the outflowings of the human mind, still the fountain and all the streams are earthly, sensual and devilish; nor can they be otherwise until the fountain be broken up, and a new heart and a new spirit be given and

received. *“First make the fountain pure and the stream will be pure;” “First make the tree good and the fruit will be good.”* In illustration of this doctrine, we shall offer a few remarks on 1 Cor. 1: 22 and 23: *“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.”* The Jews were connected with Abraham only by carnal ties; they were the natural but not spiritual children of that patriarch, and the covenant which embraced them, together with all such as were bought with Abraham’s money was based on carnal provisions. Their circumcision was outward, in the flesh; their worship was the observance of carnal ordinances, in a worldly sanctuary, and their rewards for obedience and punishment for transgression were temporal: the former consisted in corn, wine and oil, peace, plenty and exemption from pestilence the land of Canaan, and national prosperity: for disobedience they experienced the reverse of these things. Their religious instructions were communicated by presenting external considerations to their natural minds, and as there is no stability in the natural mind, they required that such evidences as they could comprehend should be often repeated. At one moment the simultaneous cry is heard from them, *“All that the Lord commandeth us, that we will do;”* at another they as unanimously demand of Aaron to *“Up and make us gods to go before us; for as for this Moses, we wot not what has become of him.”* These evolutions were as common among the Jews in the time that Christ and the Apostles were preaching among them, as in the days of their fathers, in the wilderness or in the land which the Lord gave them. From *tradition* and *habit* they could conceive of no other faith than such as rested on *signs* and *moral suasion*,

tangible to their carnal perceptions: hence they were constantly solicitous for external signs.

When our Lord scourged out the merchants and brokers from His temple, they demanded of Him a sign, seeing He executed these things; and when He reproved the greedy avarice of those who crossed the Sea of Tiberias, in hope of feasting again on loaves and fishes, they said to Him, What sign shewing thou then, that we may see and believe? what doest thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, *“He gave them bread from heaven.”* Only the day preceding, these men were fully convinced that Christ was truly that prophet that was to come: they believed on Him, and it was necessary that Christ should avoid them, as there was danger that this set of *carnal believers* would come and take Him by force and make Him king; but in less than twenty-four hours they required another sign, and as their carnal expectations were crossed they turned back and walked no more with Him. This example is of itself sufficient to show how far *natural faith* will go, and how infinitely short of *saving faith* it must fall; but other examples are given in abundance.

On another occasion when they had witnessed His power in casting out devils, and had blasphemously charged Him with casting out devils by Beelzebub, they came to Him and said, Master, we would see a sign from thee! How astonishing, when they had seen Him heal the sick, give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and raise the dead, that they should still require a sign; but such is the nature of *natural or dead faith*, like our natural bodies, which in regard to spiritual things are dead, though they may be fed with earthly food to overflowing; yet they require to be fed again and again, because these

bodies are perishable, and the food on which they are sustained is earthly, perishable food. Faith produced by *moral suasion* is always of this perishable kind: the devils possess it, and it makes them tremble; but it never made them love God, nor can it work by love nor purify the heart — Jesus answered them: “*An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas:*” and this sign being the same that Paul preached, as we shall presently show, was not adapted to their carnal capacity, they stumbled at it, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. Still they required a sign! And when they had accused Him before Pilate, and by perjury obtained the sentence of death against Him, they continued to reiterate their demand for a sign, and proposed that if He would come down from the cross to which they had nailed Him, they would believe on Him. The very terms on which they proposed to believe would, if acceded to by our Lord, have destroyed the foundation of the faith of God’s elect, as it would have inevitably overturned the whole work of salvation by the death of Christ, and raised an insuperable barrier to Paul’s preaching Christ crucified, as the sign of the prophet Jonah. But, although Jesus came not down from the cross to gratify their carnal lust for that description of testimony, yet there were evidences given as could not fail to produce *rational conviction* on their minds, and such as caused them to cry out, “*Surely, this was the Son of God!*” They could in no other way rationally account for the darkened sun, the quaking earth, the rending rocks, the opening graves and rising dead. If it were possible that a rational conviction could ever lead to a genuine faith, we should suppose this instance was sufficient to secure all the advantages that could result

from natural conviction. But alas! how vain and unproductive of reconciliation to God! No sooner had the darkness of three hours subsided, the dire convulsions of nature ceased to agitate their guilty senses, than they went on to procure a Roman guard to watch the sepulcher; and when they learned that He was risen from the dead they hired the guard to testify that His disciples had stolen Him away while they were sleeping.

If to convince man as an intelligent being, that the Scriptures are the testimony of God, and that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of His people, by presenting arguments or signs to their natural minds, were sufficient to make them true converts to the christian religion, what deficiency was there in the signs which were presented to the carnal Jews? Or what superior facilities have the workmongers of this nineteenth century, for carrying home to the human mind stronger natural convictions than were produced by raising the dead, casting out devils, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, stilling the tempest, withholding the light of the sun at noon, convulsing the earth, rending the rocks, opening the graves, and causing the slumbering tenants thereof to come forth? Has the natural mind of man become more susceptible to the light of truth? Are the natural prejudices of the human heart more easily overcome by reason, or do these modern *daubers with untempered mortar* really believe that they possess wisdom and power superior to that of Jesus the Head of the church?

Among the Gentiles also there are those whose characters and condition correspond with the description given of the Jews; these also require signs, external evidence, carnal conviction, or what is more classically termed moral suasion, such as may be set home by

arguments, books, tracts, excitements, enlisting selfish feelings, fame, honor, respectability, and the hope of avoiding punishment and securing a reward. Perfectly adapted to the carnal wishes of such, is the coming and development of *that Wicked*, whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. The two-horned beast mentioned in Rev. 13:11, is also represented as exercising like external evidence, addressed to and taking effect on the natural powers of the human mind. "And he exerciseth all the power of the beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of these miracles which he hath power to do in the sight of the beast." (Rev. 13: 12-14)

The success attending the modern schemes for carrying natural conviction to the human mind, and so captivating men is accounted for by predictions going before, concerning the man of sin, the son of perdition, the dragon, the beasts and every form in which antichrist has, does or shall hereafter appear. The wonderful boasting about *new light* reflected from seminaries, Sunday schools, tracts, anxious benches, camp or protracted meetings, and all other signs and lying wonders, sought by Jews and Gentiles, and supplied by ancient Jews or modern proselytes, is but the development of the powers of darkness, which men will choose rather than light, according to the

declaration of the word of God. The Jews require a sign!

The Greeks seek after wisdom. The research of the ancient Greeks after knowledge is proverbial, and when appropriately directed was laudable; for all the sciences of this world are valuable in their place, but altogether inferior to and disconnected from that wisdom which cometh from above. The error of the Greeks was not simply that they sought after wisdom, but that they sought to incorporate their human wisdom with religion. And as God had made foolish the wisdom of this world, and hidden the things of His spiritual kingdom from the wise and prudent of this world, and revealed them to babes, they erred in seeking to reduce the religion of God our Savior to human science. To all those who, like the Greeks, are seeking after worldly wisdom, the Gospel of Christ in the simplicity in which it was preached by Paul, and all the primitive ministers sent forth by divine authority, the account of a crucified Savior was foolishness. They are led from human policy to see religious knowledge from the halls of literature and colleges of science. In their estimation it is no less foolish and absurd to look for human science from the untutored savages, than for religious instruction from unlettered fishermen. What was remarkable in the opposition of Jews and Greeks to the religion of Jesus Christ, is blended in the modern popular theory of their successors in delusion to the present time. And still the words of the apostles are as applicable as when at first uttered, the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

But we preach Christ crucified. The pronoun *we* includes all the apostles of the Lamb and true ministers of Jesus Christ.

These all preach Christ crucified, which is in reality both a sign and wisdom; but not of a kind adapted to the carnal sense of Jews and Greeks. The signs which the Jews required were such as Christ told them should not be given to them, and the wisdom which the Greeks sought after was that which God hath made foolish, and which Paul says in connection with this text, he did not use in his speech or preaching: for Christ had told the Jews, *“There shall no sign be given you but the sign of the prophet Jonah.”* The preaching of Christ crucified is the sign of the prophet Jonah, *“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, even so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”* The sign of Jonah was an emblem of Christ in the heart of the earth, of Christ crucified, &c.; hence to preach Christ crucified, is to set forth that sign of which our Lord spake, and the only one that God will give. This sign not only sets forth the descent of our Redeemer into the dark dominions of death, through His crucifixion, loaded with the transgressions of all His chosen people, for whose offences He was delivered up; but His triumphant resurrection, at the time signified in the sign, for the justification of all for whom He was delivered up. Three days and three nights show also the extent of time that His mystical body or any part of it should be held in that death from which Christ is engaged to raise them up and cause them to sit together in the heavenly places; for in the fullness of the dispensation of time, which are three, counting from Adam to Moses, from Moses until the coming of Messiah, and thence to the end of time. As at the expiration of three days and nights, the perfect body of Jesus left the environs of the king of terrors, so at the end of time He shall

deliver up to His father the fullness of His mystical body.

This sign, whether considered in reference to that body which died on Calvary, or the church which is His body and the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, is embraced in the preaching of Christ crucified. And as the sign is of a spiritual nature, the Jews, who looked for salvation by works, and for a foundation of their faith in external or natural signs, adapted to their carnal sense, stumbled at it; for it is to them a stumbling block. They stumble at the word, as Peter has said, being disobedient, whereunto they were appointed. If therefore it were possible by any course of preparatory study or labor, to present the subject of Christ crucified in such a light as to enable the Jews to understand it, and so prevent them from stumbling at it, it would cease to be the Gospel of Christ. It would fail to be the anti-type of Jonah, and it would involve what Paul studiously avoided, viz: that the faith of God’s people should stand in the wisdom of men but not in the power of God. Is the preaching of Christ crucified in this day a stumbling block to boasting Arminians (freewillers), and legal workmongers, so that they can neither understand nor love it? So it was when preached by Paul, and in all cases where the doctors of divinity, as they are called, manage to present a system or theory of religion which can be taught in seminaries, colleges, sabbath or other schools, by tracts, catechisms, arguments, moral suasion, or by any other means of human device, they present a gospel which Paul did not preach, which is another gospel, and those who have devised it and all who preach it are accursed; for if Paul, or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel than that which was preached in the primitive church by the apostles, *“let him be*

accursed."

We need not labor to prove that religious doctrines are invented and taught by men in the present age, so widely differing from the Gospel preached by Paul, that instead of avoiding, as he did, the excellency of speech which man's wisdom teaches, those who are engaged in promulgating such doctrines, use enticing, or persuasive words, the consequence of which is, that their convert's faith stands not in the power of God, but in the wisdom of men. This spurious sort of preaching is not unproductive of faith; for unregenerate sinners are capable of believing such systems, and it is taught to unregenerate children and adults in schools, as worldly sciences are taught, and they can and do learn it upon the same principle and with as great facility as they can learn grammar, mathematics or mechanical operations, and ten converts are made to such delusions, where one is made by grace to the faith of the Gospel of Christ. The faith therefore of a majority of modern converts, being destitute of spiritual life, is dead faith.

To the worldly wise, who have confidence in their superiority of knowledge and talents, the Gospel of the Blessed Redeemer is foolishness. The Grecian philosophers could but regard the doctrine of salvation through the blood and righteousness of One that was crucified, with contempt. They regarded the doctrine preached by Paul as an imposition, a delusive infatuation. And to this very day, all who understand the christian religion to be a science, capable of being taught in schools, and comprehended by human intellect, without the special quickening operation of the Holy Ghost, do regard the real Gospel of Christ, when preached in its primitive simplicity and purity, as foolishness.

To all those who possess dead faith,

however orthodox that faith may be, the preaching of Christ crucified is a stumbling block and foolishness. Hence the mighty efforts which are made by work-mongers to remove the stumbling block, and the offense of the cross of Christ, and the cunning craftiness of the wise and prudent of this world, to invent and practice upon some principle which they regard as an improvement upon the Gospel as preached by the apostle Paul.

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As you may have learned by now, the postal rate for second class postage has gone up by 134%. This is the largest increase we've yet seen, and the second increase since we begun publication in July, 1980. We can, and will, sustain this increase, and make all necessary efforts to continue the magazine as usual without any immediate increase in subscription rates.

However, we do make a request from you. If you do not read it, nor want it, we would very much like to hear from you. We are having to drop names and addresses of non-renewals to cut cost. If you want it, and cannot afford it, then please let us know. Many of our friends in free grace who love the truth help us a great deal, and I'm sure that such individuals would not want any hungry poor and afflicted child of God to go without it if he finds it encouraging to his soul.

We need, more than anything else, your prayers, and additional names and addresses, or gift subscriptions.

UNION BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

By William Huntington, G.S., 1849

All religion that is not received from the fullness of Christ is nothing but a show, a form of godliness without the power; which renders the performer in the sight of God no more than a hypocrite, or a wolf in sheep's clothing. For as God appointed the union between the two natures of Christ in eternity, and likewise the union between Christ and His seed, so from eternity He predestinated them to be conformed, in time, to the image of His Son. (Rom. 8:28) Hence, when He sent Him forth, it was to gather in Him the predestinated children of God that were scattered abroad. He was lifted up upon the cross to draw all these men unto Him; He was exhibited as the promised Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people was to be; and exalted to the right hand of God, that we might be called to the fellowship of Him; and, by the reception of the Holy Spirit of promise, be joined to Him and made one spirit with Him, and so have our affections set at the right hand of God, where Christ sitteth. Christ being the fountain of all godliness, all fullness dwells in Him; so out of His fullness all grace must be received, and be continually derived from Him by virtue of union with Him; of which union I intend now to speak.

And, first, there are many things which the Spirit of God performs in the elect sinner **BEFORE** this eternal union can take place, so as to be manifested, known, felt, and enjoyed in time. And, first, the sinner is naturally proud, and God beholds the proud afar off. The soul being by pride at a distance from God, it shows the need of humbling grace; for God says He will dwell with the humble and the contrite spirit. Secondly, all men are by

nature unbelievers. God has concluded all men in unbelief; and an evil heart of unbelief is called a departing from the living God. Hence appears the **NEED** of a work of faith **ON** the soul; and faith is **GOD'S WORK**.

The different impressions and motions of the soul under the influence of the ever-blessed Spirit, in bringing about and effecting this union, are three: divine sensations, heavenly motions, and supernatural affections. Divine sensations give the first spring. Inward troubles about salvation render every human comforter a physician of no value; this, under the Spirit's influence, drives the thoughts from earth to heaven: "*I thought about God, and was troubled.*"

I now come to touch upon the Scriptural description of this ever-blessed union, as it is set forth by the union that subsists between the vine and its branches. "*I am the Vine, ye are the branches.*" There is nothing more fruitful than a vine. There is nothing that can be called wood that is so weak; and yet there is no root in the earth that contains so much life, sap, and nourishment as the root of a vine; nor is there any plant that is productive of so much generous liquor nor any thing that can produce any thing stronger, if it be distilled. Witness spirits of wine. And so in this union. Who could ever have thought that such great things should have been accomplished by the Saviour, when He appeared in the world a poor and needy man, a worm and no man, the despised of the people, and crucified through weakness? This was David's Offspring; but David's Root was hid in David's branch; and in that ever-blessed Root is the natural life of all mankind, the life of angels, and the eternal life of all the chosen millions. "*In Him, we all Live, and move, and have our being;*" and from Him the blessing of eternal life is received by all

that believe; and from Him the new wine of the kingdom is poured forth, the wine of eternal love, which is strong as death; and whoever drinks thereof forgets his poverty, and remembers his misery no more. *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”* To abide sensibly in Him, is to stand by faith in His strength, to have the mind swaddled with His Truth, to shine in His light, to enjoy His countenance, to feel His power, to find the heart enlarged by a sense of His love, to observe his goings and coming, (in the soul) to bemoan his absence, to be entertained with his visits, and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has made us free; and not to be entangled in the traps of error, in the servitude of sin, nor with the yoke ~ legal bondage.

Sometimes the branches of a vine are without leaves and without fruit; but the branch that is in the vine still has life in its root, in which life he both the leaves and the fruit, and nothing is wanted but the sun to bring them forth. So the child of God, through slips and falls, often loses the *external* verdure of his profession; at which times faith is languid, love cold, patience in a decaying state, hope at a low ebb, zeal abated, and all joy apparently gone. But Christ shines, and revives His work, communicates refreshings from His presence; the wind blows afresh upon the garden, and the Beloved is once more invited to eat His own pleasant fruits. But, *“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”* A man may be in Christ *professionally*, but *not spiritually*. There are Christians in *name and show*, and there are Christians in *spirit and principle*. He that is in Christ only by profession and confession, by

head knowledge, by gifts, by zeal, by flashes of joy springing up from the stirrings and motions of natural affections, is sure never to abide, for want of deepness of earth, or a broken heart; for want of moisture, or the wellspring of divine life; and for the want of root in themselves, which is the love of God shed abroad in the heart. Such are cast forth by the church (*used to be, anyway — S.C.P.*), either for their open profanity, or else for their damnable heresies which they embrace, and by which they are discovered, and for which they are cast forth, as a branch is pruned or cut off. And soon they withered. Their zeal, joy, and first knowledge, all wither together; and men gather them - imposters, heretics, apostates, hypocrites, or worldlings, gather them into their company and unto their assembly; and the end of them is to be burned, body and soul, in hell fire.

Furthermore. *“He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.”* All the elect are made partakers of the Spirit of Christ. *“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”* The whole fullness of the Spirit is without measure in the Saviour; and the same Spirit operates and dwells in all the saints, whose bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost. And under the sweet influence of the Spirit of love, our glorious and eternal union with the Saviour is manifested to the elect sinner; for by the Spirit God calls us to the fellowship of His Son, and when once the poor sinner feels Christ’s love operating in him, and all his affections going out after Him, then he passes into the bond of the covenant, into the joy of the Lord, and into the glorious liberty of the children of God; he enters into his rest, and rests from all his burdens and from all his legal and dead works; and says for himself, *“My Beloved is mine, and Jam His;”* while

mutual affection, the bond of all perfectness, makes the union so clear, so close, so sweet, that they understand what He means when He says, *“Believe that I am in you and you are in me;”* and again, *“I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse.*

This union being represented by the vine and its branches, shows the root in which our life lies, where it is hid, and the way in which it is communicated to us. And as the vine branch, which often appears without leaves or fruit, has life still in its root, so had the elect life given them in Christ Jesus before the world began, though they are by nature the children of wrath even as others, and dead in trespasses and sins, ‘til quickened by the Lord of life and glory.

Furthermore. The vine, contrary to most plants, never bears fruit in the old wood; the new branch, and its new fruit in the branch, both spring together. If no life be communicated, there is no new branch; and if no new branch, no fruit. So old nature can never bring forth fruit unto God. The new and living principle, the new man of grace, must be formed in the soul before fruit can be expected. *“No man can gather grapes of thorns, nor figs or thistles.”* *“In Christ is our fruit found.”* The new man of grace comes from Christ’s fullness of grace; the Holy Ghost operates, and produces His own fruits, which are called the graces or fruits of the Spirit; and from the tuition of grace, we learn to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world; and from the operations of grace all good works proceed. *“I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I but the grace of God that was with me.”* Moreover, as the new branch of the vine, the new cluster, and the new leaves, all lie in the life, which is in the root of the vine, so our new man, new

fruit, and the verdant leaves of our holy profession, are all derived from Christ, who is our Life and our holy Root; and on which account, though at times we appear withered in our profession and barren in our souls, yet, by virtue of our union with Him, in Him shall our leaf be green, our leaf, in Him, shall not wither, nor shall we entirely cease from yielding fruit; yea, *“they shall still bring forth fruit in old age, to show that the Lord is upright,”* or righteous, or faithful, in giving to us, according to His covenant promise, the blessing of eternal life.

But again. As the life of the branch, the fruit, and the leaf, all lie in the sap, which is the life of the vine, and in which it is secured and hid as in its root; and which life is drawn forth, and the branch, fruit, and leaf, are all set in a working motion by the warm, enlivening rays of the sun; even so when the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His beams, the barren desert becomes a fruitful field, and the degenerate plant of a strange vine appears, with all its silverlings and with all its blessed clusters.

This union is further set forth by the act of engrafting. *“For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive tree, and partakest of the root and fatness of the olive, boast not against the natural branches; but, if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.”* (Rom. 11:17, 18) This engrafting is said to be contrary to nature. The natural way of grafting is to take a scion out of a good tree, which produces good fruit, and to graft it into a wild stock, the wood of which, being reduced to its natural standard, as it can sink no lower, will stand better and endure longer in the earth than the wood of a good tree, could a stock of such wood be procured. But our ingrafture is

contrary to nature; for we are the wild olive branches, cut out of an olive tree which is by nature wild, and are engrafted into a good olive tree, so as to partake of the goodness and fatness of the good tree; which wonderful engrafting must in the end purge out all the wild nature of such a wild branch. And this is done in part at the sinner's conversion, by implanting a principle of grace in the heart; and will be effectually accomplished when our mortal bodies shall put on immortality, and these corruptible bodies shall have put on incorruption; for then mortality, with all its wildness, shall be swallowed up of life, and immortality be all in all.

From Gospel Standard, 1849

WHOSOEVER WILL
(selected, author unknown)

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Rev. 22:17

This portion of the inspired record is often cited as sustaining the doctrine of the freedom of the sinner to accept or reject the grace of God; which according to that system only offers conditions of salvation which are not effective without the consent of the sinner who must at least accept the offered favor. If this theory is sustained by even one passage of that testimony which God has given, then it is true, and all opposing doctrines are overthrown. But if it is not thus supported, then no sophistry of men can make it true. It can be of no advantage to hold any false sentiment, for it will not become true by age; nor yet can skillful argument and devoted zeal remedy its falsehood. Therefore, let the text

be considered in its connections as written by the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit, and may the grace of God enable us and every reader to hear with submissive reverence what the Lord speaks; and in the discussion of this subject *“Let God be true, but every man a liar.”*

It must not be forgotten that all this wonderful revelation which is written by John is the testimony of Jesus Christ, which is the spirit of prophecy. (Rev. 1:1 and 19:10) Then it has its proper application to the body of Christ, which is the church, redeemed out of every nation; and any interpretation of its figurative language must be erroneous if it is not consistent with the plain record of divine truth in the Bible. But it will only be necessary at present to candidly consider the immediate context to see the error of the application of the expression in the text as appealing to dead sinners to “come,” either to the church or to any other *place*. Twice in the preceding portion of this chapter the Lord announces (vs. 7 & 12) that He comes quickly. Then in verse 16 He gives the seal of His own name, Jesus, to signify the genuineness of the message. To this the Spirit and the bride respond in the words of the text.

There is always perfect harmony with the will of God in the prayer indicted by the Spirit; therefore the Spirit says “Come.” There is nothing which can afford to the church (which is the bride in this text) such fullness of joy as the coming of her Lord. Hence, she always responds as here written, and repeated in verse 20, *“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”* It is worthy of special observation that the Spirit and the bride speak with one voice in saying “Come.” There is no discord, and no argument is necessary to convince the bride that His coming is desirable. In all the fervor of glowing love she responds to His word

with the rapture of His holy Spirit, "Come." This is the language which peculiarly characterizes the bride, the Lamb's wife. (See chapter 21:2, 9)

"And let him that heareth say, Come." In this expression the Spirit and the bride agree. The liberty is freely accorded to every one that *heareth* to unite in this fervent prayer. Throughout this book a very special peculiarity of those addressed is stated in the fact that an ear to hear is given them, and only he that hath an ear is commanded to hear the message of the Spirit to the churches. As none can hear but such as are made alive by the quickening power of the Spirit of God, only they who are led by that Spirit are included in this expression. In a natural application this language would not include one but such as are alive, so the distinction is clearly marked in the spiritual application; none but such as hear are authorized or permitted to say, "Come."

It is God that worketh in every one that hath an ear, not only to will, but also to do of His good pleasure. Every one who hears the voice of the Son of God, in that hearing is made alive; for He is the Lord from heaven, a quickening Spirit; and the words which Jesus speaks are spirit and they are life. Only such as are thus made alive have that eternal life which Jesus gives to His sheep; and they alone have the will to pray for the coming of the Lord. Hence, it is evident that the Spirit of Christ dwells in any one who really desires His coming. This is in harmony also with the assurance given in Hebrews 9:28, *"Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."* It is enjoined upon him that heareth to say, "Come;" and every hearer feels that all his salvation and all his desire is embraced in that prayer for the manifest coming of the Lord,

because, *"when Jesus, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."* (Col. 3:4)

They who hear the life-giving word of God are all made thus to unite in the longing and urgent petition of the bride, the whole church of the redeemed, in praying the Lord to come. They have learned by sore experience that they cannot come to Jesus in their own strength or by will. Their only gleam of hope is that Jesus will come to them, as the Samaritan in the parable came to the half-dead sufferer. (Luke 10:33) It would have been cruel mockery to exhort this poor man to come to a hospital which was at Jerusalem. He could not get there. But his benefactor "came where he was," and brought relief.

So Jesus came to the poor and needy and saved them when they "were yet without strength." Then when life and power have been given to the dead sinner, he has the will to unite in earnest praying to come in the fullness of sovereign grace and evermore abide in his heart. In this expression of the text there is not only liberty given to every hearer to say, "Come," but it is enjoined as the duty of all such thus to pray. If that desire is in the heart of any one, it is because he hears the voice of Jesus; and all such have received life. (Jn.5:25)

"And let him that is athirst come." Here, again, a specific character is expressly defined, and it is precisely the same whom Jesus called in the last day of the feast of tabernacles, *"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."* (John 7:37) The thirsting is certainly a living one, for the dead do not thirst. But this direction discriminates still more closely; for there are none even of the living included in its address but such as thirst. In a literal sense it would be manifest folly to claim that any one can control thirst

by his own will.

How gladly would the fainting wanderer in the burning desert refrain from thirsting if he could. And it is equally impossible for one to be thirsty when he has taken a full supply of water. Just so it is only the living one who can be subject to this thirst; - and the fact that he feels thirst is positive proof that he is alive. His thirsting does not give life, but only makes it manifest. This hungering and thirsting character needs not the terrors of torment to drive him to the throne of divine grace; it is the longing desire of his heart that he might have liberty to come.

That permission is included in this commandment of our Lord, and the assurance of its certain fulfillment is found in the words of Jesus, "*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*" (John 6:37) This is that fountain of which the Alpha and Omega says He will give freely to him that is athirst (Rev. 21:6). It is in strict accordance with this promise that the thirsty are commanded to come; and they are brought by the almighty power of that Word. While no other can even desire to come, all of His redeemed are made willing in the day of His power. (Psa. 110:5) They who are not athirst are not called to this fountain; but

Poor, hungry, thirsty, fainting souls
Are freely welcome here;
Salvation like a river rolls
Abundant, free and clear.

Come then, with all your wants and wounds,
Your every burden bring;
Here love, unchanging love, abounds,
A deep celestial spring.

"And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." It would seem needless to call attention to the particular character

here described as authorized to take freely of the water of life; but many who boast of their intelligence insist that this language includes those who have not the "will," which is here specifically presented as identifying those to whom the command applies. For such as have not the love of God in their hearts, there is no liberty here given to take of the water of life. Having only that carnal mind which is enmity against God and cannot be subject to His law, they are as destitute of will as they are of power to come freely and take of this living water. Our Lord Jesus says, "*No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*" (Jn. 6:44) This one declaration settles the fact that the will of God is sovereign in the display of His amazing grace unto the salvation of sinners who were lost. Again He says to the unbelieving Jews, "*And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*" (John 5:40) This positive assertion of the enmity of the natural man against the sovereign grace of God not only proves the utter falsehood of every form of doctrine which presents the will of the sinner as the cause of his salvation, but it establishes beyond the possibility of mistake the truth that every one who has desire (or will) to take freely of the water of life is led by the Spirit of God; and all such are born of God as living children, and are joint heirs with Christ.

They who have the seal of the holy Spirit of promise being the only ones who have this will, it is certain that all who have this will are so sealed. If the tried and tempted child could rest in this assurance, it would lift him above the darkness of many hours of doubt; for however conscious unworthiness may involve him in fears, he cannot be deceived in his will to take freely of the water of life. Knowing his

utter destitution of merit in himself, his only hope for salvation must be in that grace which is freely extended to the chief of sinners.

The heart of man has never conceived of such a gracious salvation as that which is given in Christ Jesus. That conviction which causes the sinner to hunger and thirst after righteousness is the assurance that the divine blessing rests upon his broken and contrite heart; that trembling desire which longs for the water of life is the "will" by which every one is identified whose right it is to take of that water freely. All others wish to purchase their interest in that living water by their own righteousness. Only the destitute have the will to take of that water "freely." Hence there is strong consolation to the afflicted and poor people of God not only in the abundant supply of this living water, but also that in the "will" wrought in them by the grace of God they are accurately described in this text as the very people who are authorized to freely take of the water of life.

The illustration here used does not represent the *offer* of life to the dead, for they can have no will to authorize them to take. The figure implies that the willing character is *already* alive. None but the living can thirst. Then the very thirst by which a sinner is made to desire this water of life gives assurances of life already existing in the willing one. The dead have no thirst, and consequently they have not the will to take of the water of life freely. The efforts of carnal idolaters to persuade or drive dead sinners to have this "will," are manifestly inconsistent with the literal figure. One who is not thirsty might say that he wants water, but that would not change the fact. So it is not true when those who trust in their own righteousness profess to thirst after this water of life.

The psalmist sung of this wonderful

water. *"There is a river, the streams thereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."* (Psa. 46:4) These living streams are all found in the city of God, and they flow nowhere else. Therefore none but *"they that do His commandments,"* and *"they which are written in the Lamb's book of life,"* have access to this water, since no others enter into the city. (See Rev. 21:27; 22:14) To every one of them the water of life is freely given, not offered; and they are the only people that know the voice of Jesus as the joyful sound. These living subjects of the grace of God have need of the water of life to sustain them in the weary desert of this world of sorrow; and to every one of them it is freely given. It would be useless to offer it to those who do not feel the need of it. The awfully impressive testimony of Jesus which immediately follows this text must cause deep and heart-searching self-examination in every reader who fears the Lord.

If the Spirit of Christ dwells in any one, his desire is expressed in the text, both in regard to the coming of the Lord and the welcoming of every thirsting and willing one to come to this fountain which is opened in the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And every one is a subject of salvation who feels to respond to the announcement of the Lord's coming in the language of the Spirit and the bride, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."* — Messenger of Peace, 1958

THE BIBLE

By John Leland, 1836

(The Bill of Rights shows the serious side of

Leland; this bit shows his lighter side. It is his satirical stab at the new movements in religion just then taking rise: in the churches)

Would not a new translation of some passages in the New Testament, according to our present dialect and customs, be acceptable? In Matthew 10:7, "*And as ye go preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" Read this: "And as ye go, preach to the people, your money is essential to the salvation of sinners, and, therefore, form into societies, and use all devisable means to collect money for the Lord's treasury; for the millennium is at hand." Mark 16:16, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" read, "He that has attended Sunday schools, had his mind informed by tracts, contributed to support missions, and joined in societies to support benevolent institutions, shall be saved; the rest shall be damned." Matt. 10:17, "*Be ye therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*" Read: "Be ye wise as serpents in your guile to deceive men; keep out of sight that ye have to receive part that you collect for your mendicancy; show great concern for poor benighted heathen, but let your neighbors have none of your prayers, exhortations, or alms; but strive to appear harmless as doves; put on gravity and holy awe; make others believe that ye are too devotional to labor for a living, and that they must labor to support you; for if you do not appear uncommonly holy, you will not deceive the simple and get their money." Acts 4:34-35: "*And brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostle's feet, and distribution was made to every man, according as he had need.*" This work of receiving and distributing was soon after given to seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom

(Acts 6:3). Would it not be better to read — "The convention appointed a board of directors; any man who would cast into the fund one hundred dollars, should be one of them for life, to dispose of the money at discretion, and mark out the destination of the missionaries." Read Acts 13: 14, and translate it thus, if the Greek will admit of it: "Now there was at Antioch, a convention of Christians, and among them five directors; and as they fasted and prayed, they were moved to select two of them as missionaries, and when they had supplied them with a good outfit, and promised them liberal supplies, to make Christianity appear honorable among the heathen, — they sent them forth with a solemn charge to devise all means in their power to keep the money market open, and invent employment for thousands that were longing for agencies." Acts 20:33-35: "*I have coveted no man's silver or gold; ye, yourselves, know that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me; I have showed you all things, how that, so laboring, ye ought to support the weak,*" etc. These sentences are so little used in this day of great light, that a new translation is unnecessary.

A REMNANT SHALL BE SAVED

From Gospel Standard, 1847

I can solemnly appeal unto the almighty Searcher of hearts, that I am not so much for great congregations as some are, when I am in the mind of Christ, or rather, when the mind of Christ is working powerfully within my heart. No! the larger the congregation, the more rubbish there is likely to be. My soul is persuaded that it is only the remnant that will ever go to heaven, and "*there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*" It is only

the fag end that belongs to the Lord (by election), and He has declared that all the ends of the earth shall see the, salvation of God; yea, and they shall feel it too, and also know the meaning of the word salvation.

This is only to the lost and ruined sinner, however; to him that is cut up and condemned in his own conscience, that has tried every way to damn his own soul, and also tried every way to save his own soul, after conviction has entered his conscience. This is the sinner that knows the blessedness of salvation by grace, and this is one that sets a great value upon it after it is revealed in his heart and conscience by the Holy Ghost.

My soul is more and more confirmed in God's truth respecting the "remnant" and the "little flock." *"Strait is the grate and narrow is the way that Leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* I firmly believe this declaration. In my daily experience I can find but few in the way.

None but these few like honest dealing, and experimental preaching, and experimental preachers. Then we may preach, thresh, exhort, and entreat, but all in vain. It will not make one more than the Lord has formed for Himself to show forth His praise.

What a mercy for you and me that the Lord has looked upon us, and predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ! that ever He brought us to cry, "Abba, Father; my Lord and my God!" Do not, then, be so cast down, because you are such a poor few, but rather look at His blessed truth, that says, *"Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."* So the Lord delights in giving good things to those that ask Him.

And when you look around you, and see multitudes crowding to the places of worship, and then at your few, sink in your feelings,

and say inwardly, "We must give it up," then stop a moment, my friend. Wouldest thou not rather go to heaven with the few, than go to hell with the multitudes? My soul would, if there were but one besides myself, and that one Jesus the God-Man, the sinner's Friend. So, if you can prove that you are in the way yourself, that is enough; for heaven will be heaven to every one that goes there, and the joy of one will not increase that of another. Every one shall have his fullness of glory above as well as his measure of grace below; and every vessel of wrath shall have his measure of eternal punishment.

Then may the Lord anoint your eyes to see, and your ears to hear; and open your heart to receive more and more of His truth. And may He feed your soul richly upon the fat things of the everlasting Gospel of the blessed God, and cause you to sing of free grace, sovereign mercy, cleansing blood, and dying and living love; and that will raise your spirits, cheer your heart, and enliven your soul, so that you will be enabled to say, *"What hath God wrought?"* May He also give you to feel it a mercy that you are out of hell, and a double mercy that you are in the way to heaven; then sure I am that your song will be of grace. My love to the despised few.

Yours, a black rebel washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

— November 13th, 1846, T.G.

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To those readers in isolated places where

there is no Gospel ministry of free grace, and or churches of such, we wish to say that we are very much in thought of you daily. May God grant to you a very great matter of which to be very thankful. It is God Himself who instructs all His children, for He is not only their King and High Priest, but also their Prophet — Prophet, Priest and King in His everlasting kingdom. It is one good thing to think of, i.e., while many of us so often feels doubts if He taught us or if man did the teaching, this should not be too great a burden to you.

As usual, we request names and addresses of any you know who love and feel the truth.