



CAN THE SINNER DO ANYTHING TO BE SAVED?

BY

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# CAN THE SINNER DO ANYTHING TO BE SAVED?

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*Dear Brother Brown:*

I heard you patiently and attentively last Sunday in your effort to show that God, having *all power*, does *it all* in the saving of the sinner, and that the sinner, having *no power—absolutely none*—can *do nothing* to be saved.

Please allow me to remind you of some things you said. These I take as my excuse for addressing this letter to you. You said: "I may be wrong in these things; and if I am, those who know should show me the wrong." Now, of course, you remember having said words to that effect. This is my reason for writing you. If you were sincere—and I am confident that you were—in that statement, you will not become offended at my writing you, especially since you surely can have hope, even if it be a faint hope, of spiritually enlightening me.

It appears to me that, for a start, I should quote from the Presbyterian "Confession of Faith," Chapter III., Section 1: "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass." To the same import we have answer to Question 12, larger catechism, as follows: "God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby from all eternity he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, especially concerning angels and men."

May I ask you, Brother Brown, if the doctrine above quoted is not in harmony with your sermon of last Sunday? Do you accept the above as the doctrine of the Bible? Now, if the doctrine above quoted be true, we cannot see how it is possible for man to do wrong *at all*. Whatever he does is in keeping with and brought about by, God's decree, or foreordination, and, therefore, cannot be wrong. Whatever man does—it matters not what, whether good or bad—if God ordained everything, he has ordained that thing that man does. If it should turn out that man lies, steals, profanes God's holy name, or anything and everything that man does, God has unchangeably ordained it to be that way. The creed says that he "*unchangeably*" ordained *everything* that comes to pass. It does come to

pass that men kill, lie, steal. Now, if God ordained that the man or men or people should do these things, how is it that the same Holy Father should, or did, command man, "Thou shalt not kill," etc.?

It did come to pass that Cain killed his brother. (Gen. 4: 8.) Did God "unchangeably" ordain that he should do it? If so, why did the Lord put a curse upon him for it, seeing that poor Cain *could not change* God's unchangeable decree? Brother Brown, I just feel like saying that I almost know that the doctrine of the creed above quoted—which, to me, involves these absurdities—*is not true*.

God has said: "Thou shalt not kill;" "Thou shalt not steal;" "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Ex. 20: 13-16.) Therefore man is responsible. *Man does have power, can understand, can obey the commandments of God.* Surely he whose laws ever bear the impress of the infinite justice, goodness, love, and mercy which characterize their Author would not punish his creature (man) in the flames of an angry hell forever for doing that which he had no *power* to avert and which God "unchangeably" ordained he should do. The makers of the creed try to avoid the consequences of this doctrine by saying, "Yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin;" but they fail to show us how his character may be vindicated from such a charge in harmony with such doctrine.

Brother Brown, is not God the author of what he has "*unchangeably*" ordained to come to pass? If man cannot change God's unchangeable decree, then surely man is not to be blamed for anything he does.

Brother Brown, I will stop here. I kindly ask you to answer me when you have convenient time. I have some other Bible examples, but will wait till some other time and see also whether or not you feel disposed to pass a few articles with me. May I ask you to preserve this? I shall want it, whether you give it any attention or not. What hurt can it *possibly do* for us to write a few letters of this kind in a nice, brotherly way?

No, Brother Brown, I am not yet prepared to receive your sermon as true.

Yours for truth,

J. R. BRADLEY.

Fort Branch, Ind., February 11, 1903.

Dear Brother Bradley:

Your letter was received and noted carefully, and I will try to answer you. The creed you refer to is not in harmony with ray sermon. I believe the sermon, but I do not believe the creed. I never did believe that God ever decreed that any man should sin. He requires what is right and forbids everything that is wrong. I am at a loss to know what I said in that sermon that made you think of that doctrine, I was on the commission, and tried to show that the salvation of sinners is the work of God, and not the work of men. Jesus had all power, and he came to save; and if he does not do it, it will not be for the want of power; and I am sure he is willing. Then, why not risk it with him? He is both willing and able; the preacher is willing, but he is not able. Look at the failures of preachers! I am not willing to risk it with them. The sinner is neither willing nor able; so I do not wish to leave it to sinners, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." In this man's ability is denied. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." In this he denies their will to come. Now if we leave it to the sinner, it looks to me that that would be rather a bad place to leave it. No *will* to come for life and no *ability* to come! I would rather leave it in the hands of him that has *all* power, and that is the way I tried to preach it the other Sunday.

I yet think the sinner has *no* power *to* save himself. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. 5: 6.) "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." (Isa. 12: 2.) "He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail." (1 Sam. 2: 9.)

I am sorry, Brother Bradley, that you listened at me so long and so patiently and then missed me so much. I am just as much opposed to the doctrine you refer to as you are, and have reasoned against it the same way you do; but that it is impossible for men to be saved by their works I must contend.

This question was asked the Savior: "Who then can be saved?" The answer was: "With men this is *impossible*; but with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19: 25, 26.) Of course it is impossible with men when they have no strength; but I am so glad that it is possible for God to save them, and that is what I tried to preach.

Your brother,

ARCHIE BROWN.

P.S.—I will be home in a few days; so if you wish to make any reply, write me there.

A. B.

Fayetteville, Tenn., February 16, 1903.

Dear Brother Brown:

Yours of the 11th. instant is to hand. I am glad of the spirit of kindness you seem to show me. In your reply you say: "The creed you refer to is not in harmony with my sermon. I believe the sermon, but I do not believe the creed." You further state that you frequently reason regarding the seeming contradiction between the creed and the Bible just as I do in my letter to you.

I am glad to have these statements from you, Brother Brown. I certainly do think that the quotation I made from the "Confession of Faith" and some of your reasoning in that discourse and some statements in your letter also favor very much in their bearings upon the ability of the sinner to *do anything* to be saved or lost. Here is the harmony between the two, as *it appears to me*: You said, in the sermon, that the sinner can do *nothing—absolutely nothing* (because of the lack of power)—*to be saved*. You illustrated by saying that if you had *all the money in the world*, nobody else would have a *cent*; that God having *all the power in heaven and earth*, the sinner has *none*, the preacher has *none*, and, therefore, God saves the sinner without the sinner's *doing anything*, without the preacher's *doing anything*; that *nothing—absolutely nothing*—is done to save the sinner but what God does, because nobody but God has *any power*. I certainly so understood the sermon and so understood the letter.

Now if he thus has no power, no ability, to do anything to be saved (I mean the sinner), as you argue, is this not the *same* conclusion, and the *only* conclusion, to which we can possibly come from the statement in the "Confession of Faith?" God has left the sinner without any power at all, according to Brother Brown; God has left the sinner without any power at all, according to the creed.

"God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass." (Presbyterian "Confession of Faith," Chapter III., Section 1.) Then, "whatsoever comes to pass," God, by his power, made it come to pass. It does, and has, come to pass that the sinner has no power, can do nothing—absolutely nothing—to be saved, because he has no power to do anything, according to both Brother Brown and the creed.

Honestly, Brother Brown, do not the sermon and the creed favor in their bearing upon the *power* of the Lord and the sinner's having *no power* at all? Now, I hope you can see why I thought of the doctrine of the creed while you were preaching.

In your letter you quote John 5: 40: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." On this you comment as

follows: "In this he denies their will to come." Brother Brown, does the language show anything else but that the one *away* from him is *without life*, is (or must be) dependent upon his *coming* to the Savior to *get the life*? I have heard you preach, I think, about four times, and in every sermon the central thought was that the sinner must have the life *first*; then he can come, then he can believe, then he can repent; a very popular saying, both with you and all your preachers and members, being that a dead man, one *without life*, cannot do *anything*—cannot hear, cannot believe, cannot repent, does not even want to be saved, *because he is dead*, has no life. Now, do these statements favor the quotation above: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life?" (John 5: 40.)

Brother Brown, you say: "Ye must have life *first*; ye cannot come, because ye have no power—absolutely none; *ye are dead*" The Savior says: "Ye will not come to me, that ye *might have life*." Which are we to believe?

Again, in your letter you quote John 6: 44: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Now, Brother Brown, just quote the next verse when you attempt again to show how God draws the sinner to the Savior: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (Verse 45.) Yes, God does the drawing; but how? By teaching. No wonder the Savior said in your text: "Go, . . . teach all nations." (Matt. 28: 19.) Why teach them? That they may be drawn to Christ. Why come to Christ? Because the *life*, promised upon condition that the sinner comes (John 5: 40), cannot be enjoyed away from, or out of, Christ (John 1: 4; 2 Cor. 5: 17; Eph. 1: 3; Col. 1: 14). Yet the preacher can do *nothing* toward saving the sinner and the sinner can do *nothing* that he may have this life!

Yours in the faith,

J. R. Bradley.

FAYETTEVILLE, TENN., February 26, 1903.

Elder J. R. Bradley.

Dear Brother: Your letter of February 16 was received and noted. No; I do not yet think there is any harmony between the creed and my sermon as to the ability of the sinner to be saved. It has come to pass, sure enough, that the sinner has no power to be saved; but God did not decree anything of that sort, that I know of. This sad state came to pass by man's violating God's law, and not by God's decree. There is where the difference is. You say: "Honestly, Brother Brown, do not the sermon and

the creed favor in their bearing upon the power of the Lord and the sinner's having no power?" There is just this difference, Brother Bradley: The creed teaches that God's decree is the cause of man's inability; or, in other words, it traces his inability up to God; but there was nothing in the sermon that made any being to blame for this inability, except man. Man, the sinner, is to blame for being in this disabled state.

Then you refer to my quotation: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (John 5: 40.) You ask: "Does the language show anything else but that the one away from him is without life, is (or must be) dependent upon his coming to the Savior to get the life?" Yes; I think it teaches something else except this, and does not teach this at all. It surely does teach that the one away is without life, but it surely does not teach that the one away, that has no life, has to go to Jesus in order to get it. How will he get there without life? The very idea that the one who has no life has to go somewhere in order to get it or miss heaven! Before the sinner has this life he must be in the flesh; and if he is, he cannot please God. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. 8:8.) I never could see how he could get to Jesus for this life while he is in the flesh, when he cannot please God while he is there. Would it be pleasing to God for him to come? If it would be, the man that is in the flesh *cannot do it*. It looks like it would hardly be necessary to try to prove that the dead cannot come anywhere for life. Before the sinner has this life, he is destitute of the new birth; and while he is in that state, "he cannot see the kingdom." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom." (John 3:3.) If he has to go to Jesus in order to "be born again," he has to go blind, because "he cannot see the kingdom" till he is born.

Yes, Brother Bradley, my brethren and I still think that the dead, the man without life, "cannot do anything—cannot hear, cannot believe, cannot repent, does not even want to be saved, because he is dead, has no life." Yes, I think these statements favor the text that says: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." To "will" is as much out of the reach of the dead as to repent or to believe is out of their reach. If the sinner will not come to Jesus for life (and the Savior said he would not), what inducement could any man offer him to get him to come? You cannot offer him more than life, and the Savior has told us that he will not come for that. I want you to believe just what the Savior said, Brother Bradley: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." There is no difference between that and what I say, that I can see. I think it is true that "whosoever will may come," but I do not believe

that whosoever will not can come and at the same time come willingly. If men do not come to the Savior willingly, they do not really come at all. "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. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (John 6: 44, 45.) Now we want to see where "it is written in the prophets." Here it is: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee." (Isa. 54: 13, 14.) 'It does not say they *may* be taught of him, but they *shall* be; they *shall all* be taught of God. All that are thus taught of God come to God; they hear and learn of God, and they are all going to be raised up at the last day—*every one of them*. You think the text that says, "Go, . . . teach all nations," is the same teaching that is mentioned here. I think there is a difference. No man was ever told to go and teach the people to know the Lord. "They shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." (Heb. 8; 11.) Men cannot teach men to know the Lord, yet "they shall be all taught." The Lord must teach them, sure enough. "They shall be all taught of God." They could not be taught without hearing and learning. Well, then, "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and *great* shall be the peace of thy children." Jesus said: "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." (Heb. 2: 13.) Again he said: "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 should raise it up again at the last day." (John 6: 28, 39.) These are the people that are going to be taught of God. The gospel is "foolishness" and "a stumbling-block" to those people before they are saved and called of God. (1 Cor. 1: 18-24.) If God calls, draws, and saves them by the preached gospel, he does it by something that is a stumbling-block and foolishness to them. Not only that; but if that is the way of it, he does it by something they do<sup>1</sup> not hear. "He that is not of God heareth not us." (1 John 4: 6.) If God saves, by preaching, the man that is not of him, he saves him by something he does not hear.

I admit that the gospel saves the believer from error, but the believer is already born of God. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." "It



pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Now, do not forget that the believer is born of God. The believer "is passed from death unto life." This is the only man that the gospel saves. So far as I know, no man can find the place in God's word where by preaching God saves them that 'do not believe. The faith of Rom. 10 that comes by hearing is, I think, creed faith. We teach people to believe in our different doctrines by preaching to them, but Jesus is the author and finisher of the faith that justifies before God and that we must have in order to please God. (Heb. 12: 2.) "Who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." (Eph. 1: 19, 20.) It was God's power that raised Christ from the dead, and he did not do that by preaching. Now, by that very power—and in the same way, so far as I know—we believe in him as our Savior.

You make the coming to Christ the condition upon which the sinner is to have life, and you quote John 5: 40: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Well, sir, if that is the condition of getting life and sinners will not come for it, then it looks to me that they have a bad show. I do not believe it can be enjoyed away from, or out of, Christ, either; and you say you do not. Then you cite me to John 1: 4; 2 Cor. 5: 17; Eph. 1: 3; Col. 1: 14 to prove that the life cannot be enjoyed out of Christ, to all of which I agree; but I want to notice those texts. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1: 4, 5.) "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," etc. (2 Cor. 5: 17.) He is not "a new creature" till he is in Christ; so if he did something in order to get to be this "new creature," he did it when he was yet in the flesh, when he could not please God. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Then you cite me to Eph. 1: 3,4: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy," etc. Just as he chose us in Christ "before the foundation of the world," so he blesses us in Christ. He must have chosen us unconditionally, because he did it before the world was. Well, then, he puts us in Christ and blesses us in him unconditionally. One is according to the other and is brought about by the same power. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," etc. It is of him that we are in him.

Now, Brother Bradley, I am done. I have something

else to do. I am perfectly willing for you to believe that the dead can work in order to get life if you want to; but you will have to let me believe that Christ gives life to the dead before they ever can render acceptable service to him.

Your brother, Archie Brown.

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FAYETTEVILLE, Tenn., March 23, 1903.

*Dear Brother Brown:*

Your letter of February 26 and the postal card of the 11th instant have been received.

You say that you are done and that you have other things to do. You also state that you are perfectly willing for me to believe as I do and that: I must allow you to believe that Christ gives the dead sinner life before he can render acceptable service to him. You also state that you want me "to believe just what the Savior said." I am not willing for any one to be in the wrong; I desire to make an honest effort to help all to see the light. I know that I want you to feel and act that way toward me. I wish to write one more letter, which, I am sure—at least I feel that way—you will grant. I am sure, Brother Brown, that I want to understand your position. Please answer me just one more time. Of course you want me to believe it right. It might turn out that the Lord has given me the life, as you say he must do. If so, then I am a proper subject; but if it should turn out that I am still destitute of the life, of course you will have committed no sin, I hope, in making an honest effort to teach me.

There are some passages which seem to me to teach exactly the reverse of your sermon which I heard that day—and, indeed, all the sermons I have ever heard you preach and also the letters you have written me. I may be woefully in the dark. Will you kindly bear with me while I try to further show the discrepancy between your teaching and the Bible? You say that God did not decree that the sinner should have no ability, or power, to do anything to be saved, but that man himself caused this sad state by violating God's law. I can say, "Amen!" to that statement. I certainly do understand it just that way. Now, you see, Brother Brown, I believe man can come back by obeying God. In this respect, I think, your teaching is against the Bible.

I am sure that I wish to be right in this, as I do in everything else. I suppose you refer to the law that God gave to Adam in the garden of Eden when you say that man caused this sad state by violating God's law: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2: 17.) I suppose he understood that law. I think he must

have understood it, or it could not be truly said that he violated it. Cannot the sinner, i having the same sense of hearing, understanding, believing, and feeling, hear "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ;" understand, believe, and obey; and be made "free from the law of sin and death?" (Rom. 8; 2.) Paul says in this verse: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Brother Brown, what law is this? Is it written in the New Testament? Law is a rule of action, is it not? Did Paul have the life before he heard this law? Of course he did *not have life* till he was *freed from death*, and he says that the law freed him from death. Therefore I conclude that Rom. 8: 2 and your teaching conflict. Does this law apply to all sinners that are dead in sin, as Paul was? Paul, though dead, was not so dead but that he could hear and understand God's law that freed him from sin and death. Why cannot others do the same thing? Since, as I have already said, law means a rule of action, did Paul "act" any before he was freed from death? If not, tell us, then, how the law made him free.

You see, Brother Brown, the way I understand it is that the sinner, though "dead in trespasses and sins," is not dead to hearing, understanding, and believing. Now, we both believe that the sinner is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2: 1), and we both believe that God must do the quickening, or giving the life.. Paul does not say in that verse *how* it is that God quickens, but only asserts that he does it. How, then, does the Lord quicken, or give life, to the one dead, or without life? Let me make some quotations: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6: 63.) How can they be quickened by the spirit through Christ's words without hearing those words? This is another passage which does not agree with your teaching, Brother Brown. You say the life, or the quickening, must come before the sinner can hear the words. Christ says it the other way; at least I so understand him. Here is another scripture which does not fit your teaching: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20: 30, 31.) How is life to be got through his name? *By believing the things written.* You say, Brother Brown, that one *ca?inot believe till he gets the life.* My brother, do you see the difference? It may all seem to you to harmonize with your teaching, but John says one thing and you say another. You speak of the sinner's being blind

and not able to see the kingdom of heaven, because he is not "born again." (John 3: 3.) Brother Brown, do not all the scholars that have commented upon that verse speak of *seeing* the kingdom in the sense of *enjoying* the kingdom? See Matt. 5: 8, "Bles'sed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"—that is, enjoy God. No others shall "see," or enjoy, God but "the pure in heart;" 110 one shall "see," or enjoy, the kingdom of God but those who are "born again." But, be this as it may, I am sure that the sinner is said not to *see* because he closes his eyes *himself*. "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (Matt. 13: 15; see also Acts 28: 27.) How can it be said that *they close their eyes themselves* if, as you say, they cannot see the kingdom, cannot hear the gospel of the kingdom, do not even want to be saved till they get the life? How was it that Paul told sinners that they put the word from themselves and judged themselves "unworthy of everlasting life" (Acts 13: 46) if, as you say, they cannot see, hear, desire, or do anything till Christ gives the life?

You must allow me to speak of John 5: 40 again: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." I understand your rendering, or comment, to be about this way: "Ye cannot come to me, because ye have no life" Now, this is honest with me, Brother Brown. To me the Savior says one thing and you say another.

Take another passage: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23: 37.) Did these people have a will? In this case it is in the past tense—"Ye would not;" in John 5: 40 it is in the present tense—"Ye will not." They are exactly the same in meaning, if I can see at all. All these need to be harmonized with your "blind-cannot-hear-cannot-even-want-to-be-saved" idea.

Then you speak of the sinner's being "in the flesh," and hence "cannot please God," etc. (Rom. 8: 8.) Yes; Paul is showing these brethren that to live after the lustings of the flesh is only to be condemned. Let me quote one verse in the same connection: "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." If one has to "mortify the deeds of the body" in order to live, it does seem to me to clearly teach that he is still "in the flesh" in a sense, and that life, or living, in Christ depends upon keeping down "the old man with his deeds." (My quotation is verse 13.) You say: "I never could see how he [the sin-

tier] could get to Jesus for this life while he is in the flesh." If it takes an *entire* freedom from the flesh to get to the Savior, where the life is, these brethren, then, had never gone to him, for they still had to "mortify the deeds of the body" in order to live. Again, you say: "Before the sinner has the life he is destitute of the new birth." Then you argue that the sinner cannot do anything to be spiritually born, no more than he can do anything to be naturally born. Now, I want to see if this analogy is shown in the Bible. You will agree, Brother Brown—will you not?—that there is, or must be, a spiritual begetting, or planting, of the life before there can be a birth. Then, how does the Father in heaven do this? Paul (1 Cor. 4: 15) says that the Corinthians were begotten "through the gospel;" James (1: 18) says they were begotten through, or with, "the word of truth." If, as you say, the sinner cannot hear, cannot understand—can do absolutely nothing—how is he begotten by the gospel, or "word of truth?" Remember, this is the planting of the life by the Father; it is the quickening; yet you say that he must have the life before he can hear. To me your teaching and the word of God do not agree.

Again, you say: "To 'will' is as much out of the reach of the dead as to repent and believe." Then you say: "I think it is true that whosoever *will* may come, but I do not believe that whosoever *will not* can come, and come willingly." It seems to me that at one time you *almost* admit that the sinner can *will not* to come, and, again, that you deny him *any will* at all. Maybe you can make this clear to me. I shall see. As it is, it is about "as clear as mud."

Then you refer to Isa. 54: 13; John 6: 44, 45, and say: "It does not say they *may* be taught of him [or of God], but they *shall he*; they *shall all* be taught of God. All that are thus taught of God come to God; they hear and learn of God, and they are all going to be raised up at the last day—*every one of them*" Then you say: "You think [that is, I think] the text [Matt. 28: 19] that says, 'Go, . . . teach all nations,' is the same teaching." Yes, I do certainly think so.

Then you say, "No man was ever told to go and teach the people to know the Lord," and you refer me to Heb. 8: 11 to prove it; yet you say they shall be taught. Then you say: "The Lord must teach them." Did the Lord teach the Corinthians *before Paul went there with the gospel, by which they were begotten*? Then, Paul did not beget them at all with the gospel; but the Lord did it. How, Brother Brown, did the *Lord teach them*? How does he *now* do this teaching? Does he employ words? Surely not; for that would be the same as the gospel, and you deny that to the one to be drawn. Then tell us how God, he being the teacher, and

the sinner being the pupil, or learner, does this teaching. Again, you say: "The gospel is 'foolishness' and 'a stumbling-block' to those people before they are saved and called of God." Now, Brother Brown, does not Paul say that God does this calling *by the gospel*? "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 2: 13, 14.) Please harmonize this *choosing to salvation* through the Spirit and belief of the truth, and also the *calling by the gospel* to the obtaining of the glory, with what you have already said, both in your sermon and in your letter to me—that is, that God does it *independently* of gospel means.

Brother Brown,, you say that the faith mentioned in Rom. 10: 17 is "*creed faith*" (the Italics are mine). I am free to confess to you that I was not expecting this of you. Why, dear brother, Paul says that it "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Still, you say that it is "*creed faith*." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16: 16.) Is this "*creed faith*?" "God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe;" (Acts 15: 7.) By this faith that came by hearing the gospel by Peter's mouth God purified both Jews' and Gentiles' hearts. Is this faith "*creed faith*?"

Brother Brown, I am going to close with these quotations: How can a man "lose his own soul" (Matt. 16: 26) if, as you say, he has no power, or ability, to save it? How did the brethren purify their own souls (1 Pet. 1: 22) if, as you say, a sinner can do nothing of that kind? How can a sinner "save his soul alive" (Ezek. 18: 27), and yet have absolutely nothing of the kind to do? How is it that a brother may save the soul of an erring one (James 5: 19, 20), and yet he can do absolutely nothing of that kind? How is it that Paul opened the eyes of the Gentiles, turned "them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they" might "receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified" (Acts 26: 18), and yet a preacher can do nothing toward saving the sinner? How is it that a man is condemned *because he has not believed on Christ* (John 3: 18), and yet he cannot believe till God gives him life? How can a man "fail of the grace of God" (Heb. 12: 15), and not endanger his soul? Can one be renewed "again unto repentance" (Heb. 6: 6), unless he has once -repented? Can a man destroy a brother "for whom Christ

died" (Rom. 14: 15), and not destroy one of God's children? Can a man deny the Lord that bought him, bringing swift destruction upon himself (2 Pet. 2: 1), and not destroy one of the elect? Can one have his part taken "out of the book of life, and out of the holy city" (Rev. 22: 19), unless he has a part in them? Can his name be blotted out of the book (Rev. 3: 5), when it has never been in it? If our Savior came into the world that "the world through him might be saved" (John 3: 17), will he pass by *any* and not give them a chance to be saved?

Now, Brother Brown, do you not think that I need quite a lot of teaching? I hope you will not stop here after getting me so much interested and anxious about these things. I tell you, upon *honor*, that I do not intend this as child's play or to perplex you; *I do want light.*

Yours to be saved, J. R. Bradley.

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Fayetteville, Tenn., May 20, 1903.

Elder J. R. Bradley.

Dear Brother: Your letter of March 23 came to me in due time, but I have not had time to give it the notice it deserves till now.

Yes; it may be that you have the life that God gives, and I have not a doubt but what you have; and, therefore, I am willing to take some pains with you to get you to see as I do. That God gives life I have no doubt. "I give unto them eternal life," etc. (John 10: 28.) "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give, eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." (John 17: 2.) "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." (1 John 5: 11.) Now we see that eternal life and to know Jesus are the very same thing. "This is life eternal." What is "life eternal?" Why, to know God or Jesus Christ. I believe you know Jesus; and, therefore, I think you have eternal life. If some *man* gave you to know Jesus in the sense of this text, then that man—*that very man*—gave you eternal life in the sense of this text. When Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus answered: "For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." As God reveals Jesus to men, so he gives them eternal life, because it is one and the same thing. Now, as I think you have this life and really want to know "the way of the Lord more perfectly," I will undertake the task of instructing you.

Yes, I think Adam understood the law. (Gen. 2: 17.) You think the sinner has the same sense of hearing and

understanding, believing and feeling, and that lie can obey and be made "free from the law of sin and death." If this is correct, it would be hard to tell what it was that man lost in the fall. But the text says: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8: 2.) Then you ask: "What law is this? Is it written in the New Testament?" This is the *Spirit* of the law of life, Brother Bradley. It is written in the heart. "I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts." (Heb. 8: 10.) When this was done for Paul, he was made "free from the law of sin and death." Paul did not say the law made him free, but the Spirit of the law of life in Jesus Christ was what made him free. Did he have to obey this Spirit law which is in Christ while he was a servant of the law of death in order to be made "free from the law of sin and death?" This does not say: "The Spirit of the law of life in the New Testament has made me free." If Paul had to obey one law in order to be made free from the other, then there must have been a time when he was a servant of both laws at once. . Yes; I think law is a rule of action, and Paul acted right up to the rule after he had been made free, and not till then. You say Paul was dead, but not so dead that he could not hear God's law that freed him from sin and death. I did not know that there are degrees in death. Yes; this Spirit of the law of life in Christ makes the dead alive, and it did that for Paul; and the *very Paul* that was dead now hears, understands, and obeys. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8: 36.) If he is "free indeed," he surely ought to be able to obey. Can a man be the servant of sin and the servant of righteousness at the same time? No. Well, then, Paul did not obey righteousness in order to be made free from sin. "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." (Rom. 6: 20.)

You want to know how sinners can be quickened through Christ's words without hearing those words. Do you think that means that they hear his word while they are yet dead? The dead are going to come forth in the resurrection; but they are not going to come forth while they are dead, are they? But your text says: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Then you say that this text does not agree with my teaching; that I say the life must come before they can hear, but that Christ says it the other way. I never did say that life must come before they can hear the words that are life. Which came to those people first, Brother Bradley—those words or life? You want it that the words were first, I think, because you say he says it the other way



from what I do. Now, do you not see that he differs as much from you as you think he does from me and does not differ from me at all? "The words that I speak, . . . they are life." That is equivalent to saying: "The life that I speak to you is life. Whenever my words reach you, life reaches you, because that is what my words are." The words of a preacher are not life. The Bible tells where life is, and that is what the preacher ought to do. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye *think* ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5: 39.) There is no more life in the Bible than there is a piece of land in a deed. The deed tells where the land is; the Bible tells where life is. "This life is in his Son."

Next you quote: "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20: 31.) You want to make this teach that belief is before life and a condition of life, if I understand you. Some of the disciples were slow to believe that he had risen from the dead, and he was convincing them here that he had risen and that he was really and truly the Son of God that had been put to death. These things were written that the disciples might believe. "But these are written, that *ye*." "Ye"—who? That "ye" disciples might believe. The disciples must have been the children of God; they must have had life. If Christ had not risen, life through his name would have been out of the question; but now that they can believe that this is he, they can also believe that they shall have life through his name. I cannot believe that this text contradicts any other text. Look at this text! It is just like your text, except it is worded differently; yet there can be no contradiction in them. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5: 13.) "These things have I written unto you that believe." What does he write to believers for? That they may have eternal life? No; but that they may *know* that they do have it. Then he adds: "That ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." Now, remember, they are believers and have eternal life, and he wants them to know that they have it, and he wants them to believe in Jesus as the one that gives it to them; so he writes them. I preach to those who have life to believe in nothing but Jesus.

Brother Bradley, I think you have faith in Christ; you have eternal life. Now, I write you to believe on the name of the Son of God, and nothing else. That is about the idea of this text, I think. I do not think this text contradicts the other one. "Whosoever believeth that

Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (1 John 5: 1.) Here we see that the believer *is* born of God. If he *is* born of God, he does not have to believe in order to be born. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life," etc. If one who hears and believes "*hath*" everlasting life, is it not too late for him to have to hear and believe in order to get it?

Brother Bradley, there are too many texts in the Bible against your application of John 20: 30, 31 for your application to be correct, I think. You think that text says it the other way from what I do. How about all of these other texts? They say it *just like I do*. Then is John 20: 30, 31 wrong? No; but your application of it must be wrong. You ask me if all the scholars do not speak of *seeing* the kingdom in the sense of *enjoying* the kingdom. I do not know what they all say, but I do know that Campbell translates the word "see," "discern." So according to that, the text that says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," teaches that the kingdom of God cannot be seen till we are "born again." Now, I say again that if the sinner has to make the start in order to be born, he has to make the start blind. Suppose "see" does mean "enjoy." That would not make much difference, so far as I can see. If, then, he has to do something in order to be born, he has to do that when he does not enjoy it; if he does not enjoy it, his heart could not be in it; and if it is not from the heart, it will not be accepted. Seeing the kingdom, or enjoying the kingdom, cannot be the means of being born of God, because we must be "born again" before we can see it, or enjoy it.

Now, I shall insist that there is a work done for the sinner which is necessary to salvation that is not the result of moral force. In all those places where we are said to be "born again" the verb is *passive*. "Being born" (1 Pet. 1: 23) does not denote action exerted by us, but action received by us; and this is true in every single text where being "born again" is expressed or referred to. In *every* text it is so worded as to denote action received by us, not action exerted by us; and I regard this as a strong argument in my favor. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." (Eph. 1: 18.) This text shows that the understanding must be enlightened before we can understand spiritual things. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." (Eph. 2: 10.) In creation that which is created is not in condition to consent or refuse or resist the operation; Adam, in his creation, was not situated to consent or resist, to aid or hinder the work; and now, inasmuch as this preparation is called a "creation," we learn that it is not

“of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Yes, I agree with the Bible that they have closed their eyes. They have brought this miserable state on themselves to the awful extent that they judge themselves “unworthy of everlasting life,” as you truly quote. Why do you want to leave eternal life to their judgment, when you are so plainly told that their judgment is against their ever having it? They put the word of God from them; yet you insist that, notwithstanding this is their awful state, it is all left with them and the word of God. These are bad hands to leave it in, I think.

A man can close his eyes in a way that he can never open them; he can work into a place that he cannot work out of; he can take his own life, but he can never restore it. Sure enough, man has worked himself into a state that is so awful that he cannot see the kingdom till he is “born again.” If “see” there means “enjoy,” as you think it does, then I am right yet that “*he does not even want to be saved*” He does not enjoy the things that are on the saved side of the question, and yet you want to leave it to him as to whether he will get on that side or not. I am glad that I do not believe this part of your theory; for if I did, then I would have to believe that no one would ever be saved.

Then you quote John 5: 40 again: “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” I suppose that all admit that when a man will not come to Jesus for life there is a cause for it. The cause must be that he loves sin. Can one who loves sin and rejects righteousness—can such a man at the same time that he loves sin and also rejects righteousness reverse his preference? To say so would be to say a man can choose what he does not prefer, and that is an absurdity. It is a fact that men can do as they please about their behavior; but for us to say a man can choose the service of God, when at the same time it is his pleasure to serve sin, would be to say that he can do as he does not please to do, or that he can choose that in which he has no pleasure, which brings us back to the proposition that a man can choose that which he does not prefer; and this is to say he can choose that which he does not choose, which is absurd.

We can change our feet from one place to another, and some think we can move the will from one place to another. The will is not an organ of the body; it is an act of the mind. The will governs the feet, but *the will does not govern the will*. To say there is no reason why a man’s choice is what it is would be as unreasonable as to say there is no reason why the stone falls downward instead of upward. The reason why sinners choose sin

is because of their sinful nature; the reason why some men choose God is because God works that sort of a choice into them. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." (Ps. 110: 3.) "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do," etc. (Phil. 2: 13.) When God has done this for them, it is easy to tell why they choose him.

Cruden, on the will, says: "It is that faculty of the soul whereby we freely choose or refuse things. It is the nature of the will to will freely whatever it wills, for the will cannot be compelled; but it is unable till it is changed by grace to move itself toward God and to will anything pleasing to him." Cruden was not a Primitive Baptist, but he agrees with all the authors I have ever noticed on the will. If they are correct in this, that the will of the sinner is unable to move itself toward God, and if you are correct, that he must do this or miss heaven, it will leave all the sinners out. "If any man will be my disciple." This text calls attention to what the will, or choice, is, without suggesting anything as to how this will was produced. Is this any clearer to you than it was, Brother Bradley?

You accuse me of arguing that the sinner has no more to do in the spiritual birth than he had to do in the natural birth. I do not think I argued that way, yet I do believe that to be correct. To be begotten and to be born, when reference is made to the new life, are one and the same thing. "Begotten us again unto a lively hope" (1 Pet. 1: 3) and being born (John 3: 5) are, I think, the same thing. To prove that "begotten" and "born" are the same, when the reference is to making the dead alive, I refer you to Col. 1: 18, where Jesus is said to be "the firstborn from the dead," and to Rev. 1: 5, where lie is said to be "the first begotten of the dead." I have an idea that "begotten" and "born" here mean the same thing. When he was begotten from the dead, *right then* he was alive; he was born. So the dead sinner, when he is begotten of God, has the life of God; and as this life is eternal, that is all that is necessary. But the text, "I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4: 15), and "with the word of truth" (James 1: 18), cannot mean that Paul or his words or anything he said or did put the God life into them. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (1 Cor. 1: 18.) If Paul begat with the gospel the people who were in a perishing state, he did it with something that was "foolishness" to them. It was "the power of God" to the saved. Then they are the ones he begat.

I think I can see how you might beget a people through the gospel when the gospel is "the power of God" to that people, but I cannot see how you could beget them in the

sense of saving them when they are already saved; neither can I see how he could beget the unsaved with the gospel when it was no power to them.

You say: "Tell us how God, he being the teacher and the sinner being the pupil, does this teaching." He does it this way: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." (Jer. 31: 33, 34; see also Heb. 8: 10, 11.) Whenever God makes them know him in the sense of these texts (and, notice, men shall not do it), he must have taught them something. Whenever this has been done, then God is pleased to instruct them through the gospel and call them from all the isms of the world, so that they may obtain all the glory there is in the real truth, as in 2 Thess. 2: 14.

As to Rom. 10: 17: Yes, I said that is "creed faith;" but whether it is or not, I am willing to admit that preaching may have something to do with faith that is not "creed faith." Faith is the fruit of the Spirit, and I feel quite sure that the gospel will not cause it to be in a man that is destitute of the Spirit. Eternal life may be in a man and he never have faith at all, as must be true in the case of idiots and lunatics.

You ask me about a vast lot of texts that you think contradict my teaching. Campbell contended that when we explain one text it should be an explanation of every other text that is used for the same purpose; so I will not undertake all of them. You ask: "How can a man 'fail of the grace of God' (Heb. 12: 15), and not endanger his soul?" By giving up the system of grace and doing and teaching things that contradict it. Working for eternal salvation is failing of the grace of God. God will be merciful to him for this, though; so his soul is in no real danger. You ask: "How is it that a man is condemned because he has not believed on Christ? (John 3: 18.)" Because men were to blame for being in this state of unbelief; but that is no argument that they can get out of it. A man might be sent to prison because he could not get away from the officer. He worked himself into the hands of the officer, but he could not work away from there. So with sinners. They have worked away from God, but they cannot work back. "Therefore they could not believe," etc. (John 12: 39.) You ask, further: "Can one be renewed 'again unto repentance' (Heb. 6: 6), unless he has once repented?" No; he cannot be renewed, either, without crucifying to himself the Son of God afresh and putting him to "an open shame." (Heb. 6: 6.) I do not sup-

pose they will ever put him to "an open shame" or crucify him again. Well, then, they will not be renewed. It is impossible for them to fall away and then be renewed without crucifying the Son of God again. I think he is arguing against the possibility of their ever falling away.

Your next question is: "Can a man destroy a brother 'for whom Christ died' (Rom. 14: 15), and not destroy one of God's children?" No; but "destroy" does not mean that one of God's children is going to hell. To prove this I quote: "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." (Job 19: 26.) Job was going to see God even if the worms had destroyed him; and so the brother that is destroyed by a brother will, after all that, see God. Jesus was destroyed (Matt. 27: 20), but he is in heaven to-day. Yes; though the Lord's people be destroyed, they will finally get to heaven, too. This is an answer to 2 Pet. 2: 1; Rev. 3: 5; 22: 19. Just like the children of God can be destroyed (think of Job and Jesus; they were destroyed) and yet get to heaven, so their part can be taken out of the holy city and their names can be blotted out of the book of life, yet they can get to heaven. This destruction was temporary, however; not forever. So this blotting out and taking out affects us here, but not hereafter.

Jesus 'is going to raise up at the last day all that God gave him, and all that he gave him shall come to him, and him that comes he will not cast out. (John 6: 37-40.) Jesus said so himself, and I believe it. Even if they have been destroyed and their names blotted out and their part taken out of the holy city, they are all going to be raised up at last. None of them will be cast out; none are going to be finally cast into the lake of fire except those whose names are "not found written in the book of life." (Rev. 20: 15.) This is going to be said: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25: 34.) The ones for which it was prepared are going to inherit it, according to this text.

Your last quotation is a part of John 3: 17: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." The word "world" does not mean all the race every time it is mentioned in the Bible. To prove this I refer you to 1 John 5: 19: "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." According to that, those who were of God were no part of the world. Again: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." (John 17: 9.) If he came to give this world, that he refused to pray for, a chance to be saved, I have often wondered why he would

not pray for it. It does seem that if lie was giving the world a chance, he certainly would have prayed for it. He prayed for some, and not for others; and I will leave it to you if that was not passing some by. The world for which he does not pray he aid not come to save; the world of which he is Savior he prays for. He cama that they might be saved, or he came to save them, as in Matt. 1: 21. No man can find where Jesus ever came to give any man a chance to be saved. If it was only a chance that he gave men, then there would be a chance to miss it. It would be no more certain one way than it would be the other if it were by chance. I do not believe God has left such important matters to such uncertainties as chance.

Your friend and brother,

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ARCHIE BROWN.

Fayetteville, Tenn., June 30, 1903.

*Dear Brother Brown:*

Yours of May 20 is to hand. You quote John 10: 30; 17: 2, 3; 1 John 5: 11 as proof that Christ gives eternal life and that to know the Father and Christ in a spiritual sense and to have eternal life are equal. This I accept, but I am not prepared to accept your idea that he gives eternal life "unconditionally."

Brother Brown, I think that I am abundantly able to show that all the quotations which you make from John 17, applying them to *all* of God's people, are misapplied. I will show this at the proper time. As you misapply John 17: 9 at another place in your letter, I will wait till I reach that place to show how it is.

I want to begin this argument in the garden of Eden: "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2: 17.) You say that if the sinner has the same sense of hearing, feeling, understanding, believing, etc., that Adam had, "it would be hard to tell what it was that man lost in the fall." Thus it is that you argue that *death*, or "*die*," in Gen. 2: 17 means to *destroy*, or *kill*, man's sensibilities. I do not believe it. This I understand to be the *foundation* error, or mistake, of your theory. I believe that Adam and Eve knew more *after* the fall than before. They had access to the tree of life before they ate the forbidden fruit. (See verse 16.) The properties of the fruit of the tree of life counteracted mortal tendencies and kept them alive as long as they had access to it; but as soon as they disobeyed they were driven out and away from this life-giving fruit, and hence, under the laws of mortality, had to be subjected to disease, pain, and death. Why? Because they were separated from the tree of life. Here is the death, Brother Brown.

It is a separation. From what? Why, the tree of life. Hence God said: "Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (Gen. 3: 22-24.) Thus it was that Adam "died that day," and in that sense subjected himself to the laws of mortality. Of course he lived on for many years (he was nine hundred and thirty years old when he died a natural death—see Gen. 5: 5) after the fall.

Now, sir, did Adam and Eve lose their desire, discernment, hearing, understanding, etc.? You say that if this is not what was lost, "it would be hard to tell what . . . man lost in the fall." Well, this is just what he *did not lose*. Neither is it hard to tell what he lost. God has just told it: "So he drove out the man." (Gen. 3: 24.) Now he is separated from the life-giving fruit of the tree of life. This is the *death*. All people are born in the place to which Adam was driven. By Adam "sin entered into the world." (Rom. 5: 12.) This is the origin of sin; this is the *first* sin. We commit sin because of Adam's sin, or as a consequence of his sin. Paul says that we are dead in our own sins. (Col. 2: 13.) Now, since our sins do not destroy our powers, or sense of hearing, understanding, believing, etc., therefore God's law is addressed to the sinner, the unbeliever, the one without life—*eternal life*, if you please. (John 3: 16-18; 6: 63; 8: 32-36; 20: 30, 31.) Brother Brown says that the words, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name," are addressed to God's people. I deny it, and demand the proof. They were to believe by what is written, and in that way get life through his name; and since all Christians are already believers and are already alive in Christ, therefore I am correct. Brother Brown says: "But [yes, you *have* "buted" it, too, if I can see anything at all] the text says: 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.' This is the Spirit of the law. . . . Paul did not say the law made him free, but *the Spirit of the law*." Now, sir, I will just leave it to any and all who may read this if you have not "buted" yourself much worse than you have "buted" the Lord, Paul, or God's word. Paul says "*the law of the Spirit*;" Brother Brown says "*the Spirit of the law*." Here are Paul and Brother Brown. One says "it is;" the other, "it is not." Which will we take?



Now, Brother Brown, jokes aside, why did you put the Spirit *before* the law, when Paul has the law *first*? Is it just to try to save your theory? Again, you say of this same quotation (Rom. 8: 2): "I did not know that there are degrees in death." Well, how will you ever know it unless you read the Bible and see it? It is full of *kinds* and *degrees* of death. (Rom. 6: 2, 4, 5, 7, 8; 7: 9-11, 13; Eph. 2: 1.) Then see Rom. 7: 24: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Will you see? Surely you *can* see that it is true that there are *kinds* and *many degrees* in and of death.

Again you quote: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8: 36.) Yes, Christ makes all free from sin; but through what means—any at all? You shall see, if you *will* or *can*. You quote verse 36. Now go back to verse 32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the *truth shall make you free*" Now, Brother Brown, why did you skip the "how?"

Then you ask me: "The dead . . . are not going to come forth while they are dead, are they?" No; but when Christ speaks to the dead, they usually hear and obey. (John 5: 25, 28; 11: 43, 44.) Brother Brown, did the Savior cause these, and will he and does he cause the dead, to hear by speaking to them? You can say "Yes" or "No," just as you please. I suppose it would be no worse to say that Christ never spoke to them till *after* they arose, or had *life given to them*, than it is to change Rom. 8: 2 so as to read "the Spirit of the law" instead of "the law of the Spirit," which you have done. Christ spoke to the dead or he did not; the sinner, though dead in trespasses and sins, is quickened by the Spirit through the word or he is not. (See John 6: 63; 1 Cor. 4: 15; Heb. 4: 12; James 1: 18.) Now, Brother Brown, see this: Begotten by gospel, or word (1 Cor. 4: 15; James 1: 18); quickened by spirit through the word (John b: 63); born of the word (1 Pet. 1: 23); made free from sin through truth, or law (John 8: 32; Rom. 6: 17; 8: 2); law of the Lord converts (Ps. 19: 7); faith produced by<sup>1</sup> hearing (Acts 15: 7; Rom. 10: 17); souls purified in obeying the truth (1 Pet. 1: 22); word is able to save souls (James 1: 21); word gives an inheritance among the sanctified as well as builds up churches (Acts 20: 32); Christians are to make their "calling and election sure" by doing what the word says (2 Pet. 1: 10). Yet the sinner is dead in the sense that he cannot hear, understand, believe, etc., is he? Now, sir, if you can harmonize these with your (to me) mystical, dead-cannot-hear-can-do-nothing theory, then you will have opened the "eyes of my understanding," which I understand to be a true preacher's mission to the world.

Again you ask me: "Which came to those people first,

. . . words or life?" I will answer by asking you these questions: Which came to Lazarus first, Christ's words or life? (John 11: 43, 44.) Do the "dead" of John 5: 25, 28 hear Christ's words *before* they get life or *after*? Now, sir, when these questions are answered, your question will be answered. The Savior says: "The dead shall hear." (John 5: 25.) You can say they shall not or cannot, if you feel like it.

Again you say: "The words of a preacher are not life." Christ says that he gave *God's words* to the apostles. (John 17: 8.) Did they preach the words that Christ gave them? Should we preach anything else? Are the *words of God* that Christ gave to the apostles written anywhere? Now, did the apostles preach these same words? So if Brother Brown, Brother Bradley, or any other preacher should find these words anywhere and then should preach these same words, whose words would they be, Brother Brown? You can answer or not, but I believe our readers can see your absurdities. You say of John 20: 30, 31, and of me, that I want to make it "teach that *belief* is *before* life." I do not do any such thing, I beg your pardon. I say the good Lord does put the believing *first*. Brother Brown is the man that makes Christ say *what he does not say*—that is, that life is *first*. I ask our readers to please read John 20: 30, 31 and see for themselves who is making our Savior say what he did not say.

Then you quote 1 John 5: 13. Yes; I understand that John wrote to them for two purposes—(1) that they might be confirmed in the faith and (2) that they might know, or believe, that they would have eternal life. Yes, they were already believers; they were already alive in Christ; and they are to have eternal life in the world to come (Mark 10: 30; Luke 18: 30) upon these conditions, just as all other true believers.

Then you quote: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (1 John 5: 1.) Yes; all true believers are born, or have been born, into God's family. This I accept fully. Then you say that I think that John 20: 30, 31 says it the other way from the way you say it. No; I do not *think* any such thing, I beg your pardon; but I *know* that Christ has faith, or belief, *first*, or before life, and that you, Brother Brown, have it the other way—that is, *life* first. I challenge you, sir, to find a single place in all the New Testament where *faith*, or believing, and *life* are spoken of in connection and regarding the same persons, but that faith is used *before* life and that *life* depends upon *faith*. Now, will you come?

You say that the sinner does not have to believe to be born. I say that he does. Now for the proof: "The sense of a word cannot be diverse, or multiform, at the same

time and in the same place." (Ernesti, page 9.) Again:

"In no language can a word have more than one literal meaning in the same place." (Page 11.) According to these rules, we may translate "genneethee" either "begotten" or "born," as the sense may require; but we cannot have "begotten" and "born" in the same place. "Genneethee" being the word for both begotten and born, we have to depend upon the sense in which it is used as regards which word is to be used. If the father's part is to be considered, then "begotten" is the word we want; but if it is the mother's part, "born" is the word. See 1 John 5: 1. Here we have "born" once, "begat" once, "begotten" once—all directed to God. There is no rule in any language which will allow this. What? *Born* of our father! The very idea is absurd. Why the translators have used both words, directed toward the same party, I do not know. The one "born" of God and "begotten" "keepeth himself." (Verse 18.) Now, Brother Brown, I do not care which you take, I am going to use the word just like Paul and James use it.

What did I agree to prove? Why, that the sinner has to believe to be born. Now, here we go: "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." (1 Cor. 4: 15.) Should this be "born," Brother Brown, instead of "begotten?" Answer as you may, it is "through the gospel." "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." (James 1: 18.) Now, as sure as the Bible is a true book, they believed this gospel, this word, this good news. "Without faith it is impossible to please him." (Heb. 11: 6.) "He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16: 16.) "Believeth not" what? Why, the gospel. (See verse 15.) Therefore if the brethren at Corinth had not believed the gospel by which they were "begotten," and also "born" (see 1 Pet. 1: 23), they would have been damned, or condemned. Then you say that my application of John 20: 30, 31 is wrong. I beg your pardon, Brother Brown, but I am willing for our readers to say who "butts" that passage out of the book, or at least tries to.

You say that Campbell translates "see," in John 3: 3, "discern." All right, Brother Brown. I happen not to have Campbell's translation, but I have several others. I think, however, that, no matter how it is translated in John 3: 3, it is a settled fact that into the kingdom we *cannot* go without the birth. (Verse 5.) I think it is also true that we cannot be born unless we are begotten.

Then you say: "If the sinner has to make the start in order to be born, he has to make the start blind." I say the gospel is the very thing ordained of God to open his

eyes. (Acts 26: 18.) "The eyes of your understanding." (Eph. 1: 18.) This was done by the gospel. (See verse 13.) Of course if a man closes his eyes and stops his ears (Acts 28: 27)—why, just as long as he does that he will be blind. Yes; we must be born to "see," or "enjoy," the kingdom, as you say. Suppose it is, as you say, in every case, action "received" by us, not action "exerted" by us; what do you gain in favor of your *do-nothing* idea over and above the *do-something* idea? The text (Eph. 1: 18) which you quote as favoring action "received," in keeping with Acts 26: 18, is against you, because Paul opened their eyes by preaching to them; and 1 Cor. 4: 15, where the same word, "genneethee," is rendered "begotten," is very much against you, because it is brought about by the gospel, and not in your mystical way. Now, can you see a chance for action "exerted" by the one "begotten" or "born?" Of course this birth is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1: 13.) It is all contrary to blood, flesh, and man. Christ told the ruler that it is "of water and of the Spirit" (John 3: 5); and in verse 8 he says that the one "born" cannot be seen, any more than we can see the wind. Paul speaks of an "inward man" and an "outward man." (Rom. 7: 22; 2 Cor. 4: 16.) The "inward man" is the one referred to, then, in John 3: 8: "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." Peter says it is "by the word of God" (1 Pet. 1: 23), and in verse 25 he says it "is the word which by the gospel is preached." Do you see?

You ask why I want to leave it to the "judgment" of those who reject the gospel and judge themselves "unworthy of everlasting life." Now, sir, you are accusing me of a thing which I respectfully deny. Neither do I leave it to the "judgment" of those who do accept the gospel. I am doing all in my power to leave it to the Lord's "judgment." Those who reject the gospel, according to both Brother Brown and the Lord, are "dead;" and, according to both Brother Brown and the Lord, they are "blind." Brother Brown says: "Do not preach to them; they are 'dead.'" Brother Brown says: "Do not preach to them; they are 'blind, deaf, cannot understand.'" The Lord says, "Open their eyes by preaching to them" (Acts 26: 18); the Lord says: "Preach to the dead" (1 Pet. 4: 6). Therefore I shall leave it to the Lord, and cannot even leave it to Brother Brown. See? About a man's working "into a place that he cannot work out of," Brother Brown, with due respect to you, that sounds silly to me.

Yes; I am certain that the Bible teaches clearly that the Lord, with his old, powerful "gospel rope," if the sin-

ner will take hold and continue to hold on, will lift him out of the pit into which he has fallen and finally "into the everlasting kingdom." (2 Pet. 1: 10, 11.) Please allow me to again ask: Do you see?

Yes; the reason the sinner (that does not come to the Savior) does not, or will not, come to Christ is that "he loves sin," as you truly say. I want to change his affection from sin to the Lord; therefore I am "courting" him with the gospel, and in this way trying to cause him, by God's power, to reverse his preference. No, sir; I do not claim that a man can choose the service of God while he pleases to serve sin; but after his preference is reversed, as above shown, then I do claim his choice will be to serve God. Do you see? No; "the will does not [in the sense of which you speak] govern the will." Cruden, I suppose, was fortunate in not being a Primitive Baptist; but if he had been, he might have stumbled onto the truth at times. Yes; the will must be changed by grace, if ever changed. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, *teaching us that, denying ungodliness*" etc. (Tit. 2: 11, 12.) This is the way grace brings salvation, Brother Brown. So grace changes the will *by teaching*. See?

Then you undertake to prove that the begetting and the birth are the same in the sense of making the dead alive. I do not believe it, and refer the reader to what is already said on this subject. You say: "The dead sinner, when he is begotten of God, has the life of God." I do not believe that, either. Yes, he has life, in Christ; so did Peter, yet he had to wait till he entered "the world to come" to get eternal life. (Mark 10: 28-30; Luke 18: 28-30.) Well, I will let our readers judge whether or not Paul or James or Peter, by what they preach, have anything to do in planting the "God life" in the heart. (Acts 15: 7-9; 1 Cor. 4: 15; James 1: 18; 1 Pet. 1: 22-25; etc.) Yes; the gospel is "the power of God" to the believer, or saved, as you say; but how does he come to be a believer? "By hearing." (Rom. 10: 17; see also John 17: 20; 20: 30, 31; Acts 15: 7.) Now, pray do, Brother Brown, tell me what you gain by such quibbles. Yes, the unbeliever is to be "damned" (Mark 16: 16); therefore those begotten by Paul were in a perishing condition. How does God write his law in the heart and on the mind? In your effort to explain this you make it just about as murky as you did in trying to explain the "will" of John 5: 40. Let me try my hand at it: Under the old covenant, they had to be taught to "know" the Lord, because they were brought in *before* they knew him—that is, "the least ones" (at eight days old); under the new covenant, "from the least of them unto the greatest of them" come to "know" him *before* they are brought into the kingdom by being made

acquainted with him through the gospel. Therefore under the new covenant "they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother," to "know the Lord;" for all shall know him, "from the least of them unto the greatest of them." But is the "law of the Lord" written in the mind and heart under the new covenant? Yes. How? Paul tells it: "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistles of Christ *ministered by us*, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." (2 Cor. 3: 3.) What does he mean, Brother Brown, by the expression "*ministered by us*?" Why, he evidently means: By the apostles, who are the "us," God did this writing. Then in this figurative writing we have God, the writer; the apostles, the pen; the Holy Spirit, the ink; the minds and hearts of the people, the blank, or paper, on which the writing is done—done by teaching, or preaching, through the apostles, Brother Brown. This is the way God makes them to "know" him.

Brother Brown now admits that the gospel has something to do in the producing of faith that is not "creed faith." Well, that is honest. When I see that I was wrong and the other brother was right, I think I am honest enough to confess it. Brother Brown, please allow me to ask you what that "something" is which the gospel does in the producing of faith that is not "creed faith." Yes; "it is the fruit of the Spirit," because holy men of God spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance," and faith comes by hearing the words those holy men have spoken. You see, Brother Brown is beginning to see things the Lord's way. Hurrah for Brother Brown!

"Working for eternal salvation is failing of the grace of God," says Brother Brown. Now, look out, Brother Brown! I may have to quote some of those same passages which you have already used and turn your battery upon you. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2: 12.) Take heed, Paul! Brother Brown says you will "fail of the grace of God" by "working for eternal salvation." Then, Paul, you would spoil the Baptist doctrine by failing of God's grace and falling away and being lost on account of not having any grace."

Brother Brown says: "Campbell contended that when we explain one text it should be an explanation of every other text that was used for the same purpose." Therefore Brother Brown fails to answer my questions and tries to hide behind Campbell. "Peep!" Brother Brown, I see you back there! Yes; you make a bare show toward answering some of them. Dear brother, here are three of my questions which you MUST ANSWER, Campbell to the contrary notwithstanding:

1. "How can a sinner 'save his soul alive' (Ezek. 18: 27), and yet have absolutely nothing of the kind to do?"

2. "How did the brethren purify their own souls (1 Pet. 1: 22) if, as you say, a sinner can do nothing of that kind?"

3. "How is it that Paul opened the eyes of the Gentiles, turned ' them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they ' might ' receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified ' (Acts 26: 1-8), and yet a preacher can do nothing toward saving the sinner?"

4. "How is it that a brother may save the soul of an erring one (James E: 19, 20), and yet he can do absolutely nothing of that kind?"

I beg pardon for asking four questions instead of three.

Brother Brown says that a man can have his part taken out of the holy city and still go to heaven. What is the "holy city?" (Rev. 22: 19.) My understanding is that it is heaven. Brother Brown claims that the part may be taken *out*, yet the man may get *in*. Well, well!

Now I will try to redeem my promise in the first of this letter to show your misapplication of John 17. You say of verse 9 that Christ prayed for those whom his Father gave him, and no others; and you also apply the language of this verse to *all* of God's people. Christ prayed for others in verse 20. Who are they, Brother Brown? Now, sir, I am sorry—truly so—that any one has to be driven to say the wrong thing just to save a "pet theory." It is for the apostles, Brother Brown, that Christ is praying till he gets to verse 20. They were given to Christ. Christ "sent them into the world." Christ gave the apostles the words of God. Now read from verse 1 to verse 20 and make the persons prayed for mean all the children of God, then take verse 20 and just see. , Brother Brown, will you please read it and fill up the ellipsis with the words "all the elect" till you get to verse 20. Now, who are these prayed for? If you will read the ellipsis as "apostles" till you get to verse 20, all is harmony. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Certainly they were, and are, to believe on him in no other way.

Yours with respect,

J. R. Bradley.

Fort Branch, Ind., September 20, 1903.

*Dear Brother Bradley:*

Your letter of June 30 is before me. It is not my intention to make a lengthy reply.

No, I do not believe man has any spiritual sensibilities while in his unregenerated state. Man did not lose his

natural desires; natural desires are the only kind of desires the natural man has. As he has no spiritual desires, he does not desire the things of the Spirit. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: . . . neither can he know them," etc. They are spiritually discerned; and as he has not the Spirit, he cannot discern them. See? You say that he is separated from the life-giving fruit of the tree of life; that this is the death. I agree to that. Can he get back to it, when there are cherubim which turn every way to keep it lest he should get back? While it is true that his natural powers are not destroyed, it is also true that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: . . . neither can he know mem." I did not aim to get the word "Spirit" before the word "law" in that text. I do not see, however, that it is more helpful to me that way than it is the other way. The law of the people must be the people's law; the law of the Spirit must be the Spirit's law. If I can keep that close to Paul all along and then you are against me, it will not be hard for most people to see that you are against Paul.

You did not cite a single text that says anything about degrees in death. There are many kinds of death, I know; but that there are many degrees in and of death, I do not know, and neither do you, even if you do say it is true. "The truth shall make you free." You wanted to know why I skipped that. I thought you knew that Christ is the truth. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," etc. (John 14: 6.) If Christ makes them free and he is the truth, then the truth makes them free. They did not all know him. The ones who did not know him were not free, but the ones who did know him were free. It is life eternal to know him. That sort of a man must be free.

You cite several texts that you think contradict my "mystical dead-cannot-hear-can-do-nothing theory." The first is: "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." (1 Cor. 4: 15.) Notice that Paul did all of this begetting "in Christ Jesus" "through the gospel." How he could have done this and at the same time those people not be in Christ, I am not able to see. Paul was not their spiritual father. If he begot them in the sense of making them spiritual, then he was their spiritual father. They were already in Christ before he begot them, according to your own text.

Heb. 4: 12 is another text you cite to prove the same thing. It reads: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and in-



tents of the heart." This word of God is not the written word; it never does a thing like that.

Verse 13 says: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: hut all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." This very word that is so sharp; that divides asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow; that there is no "creature that is not manifest in his sight;" and that is the one "with whom we have to do," is the very word that gives life. No man can make good sense or good language out of that by making it the *written* word, or preaching. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth," etc. ' (James 1: 18.) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1: 1.) This same word is truth. (John 14: 6.) Of God's own will people are begotten with this "word of truth." The written word will save souls from error and hurtful stains, if lived up to as in James 1: 18. "Bom ... by the word." (1 Pet. 1: 23.) This word of God "liveth and abideth forever," and this same word "by the gospel is preached unto" us. (Verse 25.) "Word, which is able to save your souls." (James 1: 21.) By referring to verse 19 you will see that it was to the "beloved brethren." They must have been in a saved state; they had also been begotten "of his own will" by "the word of truth." Now, if they will "receive with meekness the engrafted word," it will save them from error. They are to be "doers" of the word, not "hearers" merely.

Acts 20: 32 is another text to which you refer: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up," etc. I see nothing in that to help you or to harm me. It is to the brethren. I do not think the brethren are dead.

Then you say: "Christians are to make their 'calling and election sure' by doing what the word says." You refer to 2 Pet. 1: 10. -Yes; I think Christians can make their "calling and election sure"—make it sure to their friends and to themselves; they cannot, however, make God know any more about it. Then you want me to harmonize this with my "mystical dead-cannot-hear-can-do-nothing theory." Nobody ever said the Christian cannot hear or cannot do, that I know of. The brethren—those who have been begotten Christians—are the ones referred to in all of your texts. It is the sinner that is dead, not the brethren. How are the "eyes of your understanding" doing now, Brother Bradley? You must learn to divide "the word of truth" better.

But about the text: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Christ did not say: "My words that you speak or my written words." He

speaks, and it is done. Yes, I think his words are written; but the *speaking* of them is not written. You ask: "If Brother Brown, Brother Bradley, or any other preacher should find these words anywhere and then should preach those same words, whose words would they be?" They would be the words of Christ spoken by Brother Brown, Brother Bradley, or others. There would be as much difference in the effect that these words would have on the dead sinner when spoken by us and when spoken by Christ as there is difference between us and Christ. Let us not try to make ourselves equal with God.

You challenge me to find one place in the New Testament where "*faith*, or believing, and *life* are spoken of in connection and regarding the same persons, but that faith is used *before* life and that *life* depends upon *faith*;" and then you ask: "Now, will you come?" I refer you to John 5: 24: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." If the believer "hath everlasting life," then life does not depend on his believing. Look at John 6: 47: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." If the believer "hath everlasting life," then surely life does not depend on his believing. If he has to believe a while before he has life, then the two texts referred to are not the truth. I believe the texts are true, but the theory that wants it the other way and that makes such wild and bold challenges I do not believe to be true. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," etc. (John 3: 36.)

Brother Bradley, how do you make it out that life depends on faith, or belief, when these texts so plainly tell you that the believer has eternal life? Of course you would not have translated "genneethee," "born," in 1 John 5: 1. The men who did translate it were not thinking about your theory and were not trying to translate to suit it. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3: 3.) All scholars are aware of the fact that the words "born again" (verses 3, 7) in the original are "born from above." "Genneethee" ("an-otheu")—"born from above." Hence the Savior told Nicodemus: "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The apostle tells us that "Jerusalem which is above is free, and is the mother of us all." (Gal. 4 26.) All of God's children are born of their mother; and instead of our mother's being below, she is above.

You try to prove that the sinner has to believe to be born; and you refer, first, to 1 Cor. 4: 15: "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." Notice that

they were in Christ before he begot them. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." Then you say: "As sure as the Bible is a true book, they believed," etc. Well, if they did, they were "passed from death unto life" and shall never "come into condemnation." (John 5: 24.) Then even if they are not born, as you think, they are all right, are they not? They have life, and are never going to be condemned.

I believe the gospel opens the eyes of their understanding, too; but they have to have understanding before the gospel can do such a thing. Yes, Paul opened their eyes to the truth, but their eyes were not blind eyes. That is what I am trying to do for you. You think that is a true preacher's business, and so do I. I *never* said, "Do not preach to them" (sinners), as you say I did. The sinner is blind, deaf, and dead. Natural men cannot understand the things of the Spirit; but we preach to them, all the same. God's doctrine is like "rain." (Deut. 32: 2.) It rains everywhere, and so the doctrine should be preached everywhere. Rain never converts the river into dry land, it never makes a garden out of a pond, notwithstanding it rains there. So the gospel of God will not convert the dead-sinner unto life. It may rain on a dead tree all summer, and it is still dead. Life and immortality are brought "to light through the gospel," but are not given by the gospel.

So you want to leave it to the Lord's judgment now. Well, we are just about together, then. It sounds silly to you that a man can work into a place that he cannot work out of. Men often work themselves into debt and can never work out; they work themselves into death, but they cannot work out. That sounds silly to you; but it is true, nevertheless.

You think the sinner is to take hold of the old gospel rope and hold on, and he will finally be lifted up "into the everlasting kingdom." I thought you were leaving it to the judgment of the sinners, and now I *know* it. Well, what about their judgment? Their judgment is against their ever doing such a thing. Think of a dead man's having to take hold of a rope and hold on or miss heaven! Sinners will never get there on that plan, will they? You ask: "Do you see?" No; I do not see. The believer has everlasting life. You can make a difference between that and eternal life, if you want to. I admit that there is a sense in which a man gets to be a believer by hearing, but he has to have the sense of hearing before he can hear. The sinner has not the sense of hearing in a gospel sense. The Savior said: "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word." That sort of a man cannot get to be a believer by hearing, can he?

I do not mean to "quibble." Of 2 Cor. 3: 3 you say:

"God [is], the writer; the apostles, the pen; the Holy Spirit, the ink; the minds and hearts of the people, the blank, or paper." I do not agree to all of this. I believe God to be the penman; the Spirit, the pen; grace, the ink; and the heart, the paper. The paper never refuses to let the penman write when he undertakes it; but from your way of looking at it, does not the paper often refuse to have the writing done?

"Ministered, by us" in that text means "preached by us." The new covenant says they shall all know him. If "all" there means all the race, then all the race shall have eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God." The "something" that the gospel does in producing faith is this: It testifies to them that Christ *is* their Savior; and they believe the testimony—not in order to get it to be a fact, but because it is a fact. Yes; I still say that "working for eternal salvation" is failing of the grace of God. Paul did say, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" but he said that to the "beloved" brethren who had always obeyed, and that God had worked in them "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2: 12, 13.)

You give me three questions to answer, even if Campbell did say what he did:

"1. 'How can a sinner "save his soul alive" (Ezek. 18: 27), and yet have absolutely nothing of the kind to do?'" I believe he can do that. "Soul" sometimes means "body" in the Bible. "Eight souls were saved by water." That simply means there were eight people saved. The people of Israel were promised life for obedience, and death was threatened for disobedience. The wicked can "save his soul alive," in the sense of that text, by being obedient. "If the wicked" "do that which is lawful and right," "he shall surely live." (Ezek. 33: 14, 15.) The law promised the people of Israel life for obedience and threatened death for disobedience; there was nothing eternal about it.

"2. 'How did the brethren purify their own souls (1 Pet. 1: 22) if, as you say, a sinner can do nothing of that kind?'" You ask these questions like you think I do not believe the Bible. In obeying the truth on the part of the people of God there is a purifying in it, just as they "may be *blameless*, . . . the sons of God," by doing "all things without . . . disputings," as in Phil. 2: 14, 15. They had purified their souls through the Spirit. The Revised Version says, "Having been begotten again;" the King James Version says, "Being born again;" the Geneva Bible says: "Being born anew." So I take it that those brethren that purified their souls had been born of God.

"3. 'How is it that Paul opened the eyes of the Gentiles., turned "them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they" might "receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified" (Acts 26: 18), and yet a preacher can do nothing toward saving the sinner? "' These people had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1: 15.) Paul prays that God may give unto them "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, . . . and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe," etc. His power is great to believers. They were believers, but they might not know about it; so Paul prayed that they might have "the spirit of wisdom," that their understanding might be enlightened, that they might "*know* what is the hope of his calling," and that they might know of the "greatness of his power" to believers.

I have already noticed that the impenitent have no understanding. "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word." (John 8: 43.) "There is none that understandeth." (Rom. 3: 11.) It would be hard to open their understanding, would it not? It will take more than words to get them to understand. "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." (Luke 24: 45.) The Scriptures will not open their understanding so they may understand the Scriptures; Christ must do this. The gospel will, not do it, because it is "foolishness" to them until they are saved. (1 Cor. 1: 18.)

The point I was trying to make on John 17: 9 was that Christ would not die for a man and then refuse to pray for him. If he died for the world, he surely would pray for the world. He prays for the apostles, I admit; but he does not pray for the world. He prays for all that shall believe through their word (all believers are the elect), but he does not pray for the world.

Yours kindly,

Archie Brown.

Fayetteville, Tenn., December 30, 1903.

*Dear Brother Brown:*

I have heard you preach two sermons from Matt. 19, beginning at verse 16, on "The Rich Young Man." In your remarks you said that you believed the young man to be honest in asking the question: "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" You also remarked that "as good a way as any to show a man that he cannot do a thing the way he thinks he can is to let him go his way." You said that Christ acted upon that principle with the ruler, though Christ knew he could not get eternal life by keeping the commandments. Then you quoted a part of verse 26, as follows: "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." You said: "What is it that is impossible with men? Why, to get eternal life by keeping the commandments."

Dear brother, I am just as sure that you are wrong in this as I am that Jesus spoke the truth in the language under consideration. Will you allow me to try to show you why I think so? In verse 16 the young man asks: "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" In verse 17 Christ answers: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Then in verse 26 he says: "With men this is impossible." What is "impossible" with men? Brother Brown says it means that "it is impossible for men to get eternal life by keeping the commandments." Christ tells the young man: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Which is correct?

Brother Brown, have you not made a contradiction in our Savior's language? Your interpretation cannot be right, unless the Savior talked one way and meant another way.

After the young man had asked the question and Christ had answered him (verses 16, 17), the young man asked: "Which?" Christ said: "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Verses 18, 19.) The young man said: "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" (Verse 20.) Jesus said to him: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." (Verse 21.)

Now, Brother Brown, you will agree—will you not?—that all in verses 18, 19 are commandments which the young man had kept from his youth up and that they are

commandments that we are all to keep. Then you will agree that the commandments in verse 21 are commandments which the young man failed to keep, for in verse 22 it is said: "He went away sorrowful." Of course he could not get eternal life, or have treasure in heaven, because there are commandments in verse 21 which he would not keep.

Now a conversation between Christ and his disciples begins. The young man is gone. The disciples had heard the young man ask the question and had heard Christ answer it. They had doubtless seen the young man go away with a sorrowful look. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?" (Verses 23-25.) What had so "amazed" the disciples? Why, that such a rich man as i the one they had just seen could no more enter into the kingdom of God, or get eternal life, than a camel could go through the eye of a needle. This is what seemed to them "impossible"—not that "it is impossible for men to get eternal life by keeping the commandments," as you said in those sermons. Jesus had told the rich ruler that *he could enter into life by keeping the commandments*. Jesus then assures the disciples that though it seems to them "impossible" that any one can be saved under the conditions imposed upon the rich young man, yet it is "possible" with God for all, rich or poor, to keep his commandments and enter into eternal life. (Verse 26.) Now see Peter's question: "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" (Verse 27.) Now, Brother Brown, see the Savior's answer in verses 28, 29. "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." (Mark 10: 29, 30; see also Luke 18: 29, 30.)

Now, dear brother, just say, please, how you understand Peter's question and the Savior's answer. Does not Christ teach here that even his own disciples are to enter into "the world to come" and there get "eternal life" by *keeping his commandments*, just as he had instructed the rich young man? Then, how can you say, in the face of these facts, that it is "impossible for men to get eternal life by

keeping the commandments?" Understand that our Lord here says that his disciples are to have eternal life "in the world to come" by doing these things, and that they are "*now in this time*" to have "a hundredfold" of the very things they had to forsake for his sake and the gospel's—not that eternal life is received "*now in this time*;" no, it is "*in the world to come*;" but "a hundredfold" of the things mentioned which they had to forsake, and had forsaken, were to be received "*in this time*."

Now, Brother Brown, will you harmonize these scriptures with your sermons and show any discrepancy that you may see between my reasoning upon them and the plain statements as the Master has spoken them?

Brother Brown, I have written you a snort letter, and have confined myself strictly to the case of the rich young man. Please do not think I want to stir up strife or do anything wrong; I want the truth.

Your brother,

J. R. Bradley.

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Fort Branch, Ind., January 16, 1904.

*Dear Brother Bradley:*

I do not care to discuss the subject; but I will say that if men are to get eternal life by doing, *they must do*; they must keep the whole law, or the law will be against them. To love their neighbors as themselves is what they cannot do. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." If you are going to do it, here is one thing, among others, that you must do. He proved that he did not love them as he did himself, because he would not give them what he had. No one else does, either; *he cannot*; it is impossible. Even Brother Bradley loves himself better than he does his neighbor, yet it is possible for God to save him.

[Brother Brown returned my letter, with the above remarks written on the back. He did not sign his name, I suppose, because he did not have space on the back of my letter to do so, as he had filled all the space and was crowded for room to say what he did say.]

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I send these letters forth, hoping and praying that they will be carefully read and that eternal good may result.

Faithfully yours,

J. R. Bradley.