

The Bubba and Herschel Letters

By Miles McKee
Miles McKee Ministries
Box 50395, Henderson, NV,
89016
milesmckee@cox.net

Dear Bubba,

Just the other day I ran into the new preacher in town, Pastor Epop. He was a pleasant kind of chap with a cheerful and warm face. Having introduced myself, I said I was keen to know what his church believed. He told me and I thought I'd report my findings to you.

The first doctrine Pastor Epop held was that his church was the only true church on the face of the earth. In fact it was, according to him, the very church that Jesus had come to found. I thought this to be a strange and boastful claim but felt I shouldn't mention it. After all, he was new to town and the Lord, I'm sure you'll agree, wants us to be loving and nice to other Christians.

I then asked him about salvation and he told me that it is a very important subject. Salvation, he said, was, in point of fact, to be found by belonging to his church. Apparently, he has been invested with some kind of magical or supernatural power to enable him and all the other pastors he ordains to change wine into blood and little round wafers into the actual body of Jesus. He is able to then offer up Jesus for our sins in some kind of bloodless sacrifice. I was kind of taken aback by this since I thought the Bible said that Jesus had been offered once for all but he insisted that without taking part in this ritual of eating and drinking the actual body and blood of Jesus, as administered by him, I could not be saved.

I began to say that eating flesh and drinking blood sounded very much like cannibalism but before I got the words out he said that the one thing that would help me understand his view on things was to realize he was Christ's representative. I suggested to him that all Christians were His representatives but he said that while that was true to a certain extent it was not what he meant. What he meant was that when Jesus went back to heaven, he appointed Pastor Epop as His visible and very present representative on earth.

I was not sure if I was listening to some form of religious lunacy but he was serious and plausible and besides I didn't want to be rude because we are all one in the Spirit, aren't we! Even though I found his opinions very disconcerting, I asked him if taking his form of communion would completely save me. As it turns out, vital as this ceremony is, there were up to six more ceremonies that I had to participate in. One of them was baptism. I quickly informed that I had already been baptized, once by the Presbyterians, as an

infant, and a second time by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ when I became a believer and then I went to the local Baptist church where they dunked me. I told him that I thought by this time I had all bases covered. But, according to him, at no time was I actually baptized because the churches in which I was baptized with water were not under his authority or approved by him and the Holy Spirit would only baptize me into Christ when I underwent a ceremony performed by him or his approved representatives. .

I was quite understandably puzzled that anyone could imagine such a thing when he then explained that since he was Christ's personal representative he had power and authority over every other church in town. In fact, he went on to say that if we refused his rulership and control we were completely going against God. God, he said, although He was kind, would not tolerate our disobedience.

Well, by this time, I was somewhat knocked for six and asked him if there was any chance he could be mistaken. The answer was a firm and resolute no! You should have seen it when I asked him this. The smile left his face and a cold steely look came to his eyes as he stubbornly stated that every time he spoke on matters of faith and doctrine he was infallible and could not make a mistake. I'm not sure if I grasped what he was saying but it seemed that, since he was Christ's representative on the earth, when he decreed a doctrine, God was pleased to and maybe even obliged to endorse it.

But you know Bubba, it's not for us to judge. I didn't like what he was saying but he says he hates abortion so he can't be all bad. Do you think it would be right to attend his meetings?

My problem is that I suspect someone making all these claims has surely lost the plot. I went to my pastor and he agrees. He says that someone coming to town and opening up a new church which teaches these things should be shunned. And besides that, he told me that these positions are already held and promoted in every detail by the Church of Rome. It seemed apparent that Pastor Epop had stolen his ideas from them.

So now I'm even more confused because my pastor says that pastor Epop is evidently an evil worker, false prophet and deceiver but next Sunday evening the local churches are having an ecumenical gathering at St. Bridget's Roman Catholic Church. So why give Rome a pass on her teachings? If Pastor Epop's teachings are condemned and these teachings are just the same as the Church of Rome's why do we still accept Rome?" As the Bible says, "What's good for the goose is good for the gander"

I've racked my brains on this one. The only thing I can come up with is that Pastor Epop is wrong because when I asked him how many followers he had he said he was just starting out and didn't have that many at the moment. Rome, on the other hand, has millions of followers and has been around for ages. Mind you, my neighbor, Brother G. Truth, told me that just because an error or heresy is ancient and popular it doesn't make it any less of a heresy. So perhaps that means the Roman Catholics wouldn't be any more right or any less wrong than Pastor Epop.

Anyhow, I'm not really sure what to do. Please advise. If pastor Epop or someone like him came to your town would you accept him or oppose him? Please give me your insight!

Best regards

Herschel

Dear Herschel,

What an amazing conversation you had with that Pastor Epop. Obviously the man is not in full possession of his faculties. I quite agree with your pastor that he should be shunned. How can anyone claiming such absurdities possibly be anything other than a wolf? However, I disagree with your pastor about the Church of Rome being similar to Pastor Epop's lot. I know many Roman Catholics and they are very nice people. Some of them, I'll admit, are RC in name only but others of them take their faith seriously and love Jesus. I'm sure your pastor is quite wrong to equate Pastor Epop's teaching with that of Rome. Anyhow if he really thinks that Rome is so whacked out in her doctrine why does he accept them as a valid church?

Cheers

Bubba

Dear Bubba,

Thanks for your letter. Since last you wrote, I ran into Pastor Epop again. What a nice guy! You know, that has to speak volumes. He's really very gentle and mild mannered. When I come to think of it, he's friendlier and more pleasant than many of the folks in our church.

However, I asked him for more of his time so that I could better understand his doctrinal position. I needed to clarify this business of going to heaven and asked him if I became a member of his church and took the 7 ceremonies would I get to heaven.

I was quite amazed at his answer. He replied that absolutely in no way no. The only people who would go to heaven straight away, he said, were super saints. The rest of us had to go to an intermediate state called Tory-Purga.

I didn't much like the sound of that and he must have seen it in my face because he then said that Tory-purga was a temporary abode for the dead and after we had been punished there for our sins we would be released. You know Bubba, I didn't like that prospect one

little bit and wondered why any right minded person would sign up for this kind of religion.

However, Pastor Epop then told me that he and his other pastors had power to shorten time spent in Tory-Purga. Yes indeed, according to Pastor Epop the time in torment could be shortened if we paid money for a certain ceremony to be performed. Now what was the name he gave to that ceremony? Well you know me---head like a sieve---but you know the one I mean, the one where he magically turns bread into Jesus. I wondered to myself what the poor would do for, after all, poor folks have no money and it's money which shortens the length of time their relatives spent in Tory-Purga. It seems to me that Pastor Epop's church favors the rich and mighty because they are the ones who can afford to have this ceremony performed.

But you know, Bubba, Pastor Epop is such a nice man. He hates abortion and divorce and all the other things that are killing our society. Boy, what a strong advocate he is for returning prayer to schools. I think, at the back of it, we have a lot in common.

One thing that troubles me is that Brother G. Truth tells me that our Lord Jesus Christ paid for the sins of His people at the cross and to say that people had to go to Tory-Purga is an attack on the Lord Jesus Himself. According to Brother G Truth this doctrine, promoted by Pastor Epop, undermines the very heart of the Gospel. But you know Bubba, sometimes I wonder about Brother G Truth. Sometimes I think he takes the Bible too literally.

Do you have any thoughts on any of this?

Best regards

Herschel.

Dear Herschel,

Once more thanks for your note. It's really good to have fellowship with you so often. Yes I know what you mean about Brother G. Truth. He often takes things too seriously. Mind you, behind it all, he really is a heck of a nice guy. I think, however, he fails to realize that at the end of the day there is fault in every church. There is no one whose doctrine is absolutely accurate.

However, I'll be the first to admit that, on the other hand, Pastor Epop's teachings seem to totally contradict scripture. But we must all remember, there none of us qualified to judge. The thing is, that God looks at the heart not at the doctrinal statement.

Best regards

Bubba

Dear Bubba,

That's profound! I never thought of it in that way. I must remember that. God looks at the heart and not the doctrinal statement....cool!

A bit of bad news. Brother G. Truth has withdrawn from our church because of our meeting with St Bridget's. He told me that in good conscience he could not accept Rome as being other than a perverter of the faith. The guy is a bit of a dinosaur and really out of touch with what the Spirit is doing. He also says that Rome is not the only one he refuses to endorse. According to him, and for the same reasons he wants nothing to do with Rome, he refuses to give any semblance of support to Pastor Epop. For him, Epop is the same cat with different whiskers!

Well as for me, I think on this one Brother G Truth is right. I can't see the difference either. But, my problem is, if we accept Rome we should accept Pastor Epop also. After all, they are saying the same things and if it is outlandish and wrong for Pastor Epop to claim these beliefs it is equally wrong for Rome to hold to her teachings. Yet among my friend there is not one who doesn't accept the Roman Catholics as fellow Christians. It's as you say, a matter of heart and not doctrine.

But, Brother G. Truth says that Rome and Pastor Epop blaspheme in equal measure and that to fellowship with either of them is to look Jesus in the face and spit on Him. He says, however, that we should be loving and kind to individual Roman Catholics and members of Pastor Epop's congregation: But, he says, until they come to see that Christ alone is the only savior and redeemer they need to be evangelized. According to Brother G Truth, salvation is by grace alone and this grace is not, nor can be infused into us by the taking of religious sacraments or ceremonies.

Brother G Truth is way out there! He says there can be no visible unity unless there is doctrinal unity in the Gospel. For Him, the one true Church is found in Christ alone. Christ alone is our righteousness, he says, and to look to anyone or any church to save us is an act of unbelief and disloyalty.

It's all getting far too heavy for me. I think we should all just love one another for that's what Jesus wants.

Mind you one thing does nag at me and that is something that Brother G. Truth mentioned. He said that it is obvious that Pastor Epop's teachings are erroneous, dangerous, deceitful, destructive and dishonoring to the Savior and His gospel. However these teachings are the very same as those of Rome except for the fact that the Pope has been replaced by Pastor Epop. Other than that, the two churches and their doctrines are identical. There is a great outcry from Bible Believers against Pastor Epop because he's

the Johnny come lately; but why is there no outcry from the same people against The Church of Rome?

I'll write another time.

Herschel

Dear Brother Herschel,

It will do you no good to think too deeply into things. There isn't one church on the face of this earth which has it completely right. We are all looking in the glass darkly. The issue before us is, can we love one another. The Holy Spirit is bringing all kind of believers together today in love to show the world that Christianity is right.

Mind you, I don't think Pastor Epop's flock qualify as they have obviously just make up their doctrines as they go along. I can't accept them as being a genuine church. As for Rome teaching the same thing, I very much doubt this. While I concede that in some of her older statements, they may have been a bit over the top, nowadays she is doing a fine job of bringing the gospel all over the world. Just look at what Mother Teresa did. She was splendid. And John Paul 2 talked all the time about loving Jesus. We are one in the Spirit. Many of my Catholic friends have had the same experience of being born again as we have had.

All the best

Bro. Bubba.

Dear Bro Bubba,

You, as always, raise great points. I showed your letter to Brother G Truth and he said that whereas he agreed there was no perfect Church he said there was one thing that we needed to be clear about and this was the matter of attaining right standing before God. We had to be crystal clear about it, there could be no room for error, he said.

I agreed with him and told him that Jesus said we must be born again and if we weren't born again we could not enter into the Kingdom. Brother G Truth then turned to me and asked me what I was trusting to get into heaven. He asked me if I died and found myself face to face with God and God asked me why He should let me into heaven what answer I would give.

I just smiled for I knew what he was getting at. I've been saved long enough and have heard enough sermons to know that you can never boast of any works you have done.

Most people, you see, will try to tell God about all the good things they have done so I wasn't going to fall for that one. So I told Brother Truth that if God asked me that question I would simply reply that I had asked Jesus into my heart. Brother Truth then asked me where I got the authority to say that. I wasn't sure what he meant so he asked, what scripture verse told me that we get to heaven by asking Jesus into our hearts.

I told him it was all throughout the Bible but he said to just give him one instance. You know Bubba, I have to admit I'm a bit confused now. I always thought that if you had said the sinner's prayer that you would be saved but Brother G Truth says that the sinners prayer is just a tradition of men. So I've been looking for a verse....can you help me here?

Brother G Truth then said that I didn't know and love the Gospel and it was for this very reason that I could possibly tolerate Rome and Epop.

Any advice?

Herschel.

Dear Herschel,

Don't let Brother G Truth alarm you. As we have already agreed, he is just not clued into what the Lord is doing. He really belongs in another era. And as for furnishing him with just one scripture, try giving him two;

1)Ye must be born again.

2) Behold I stand at the door and knock If any man hear my voice and open the door I will come into him and sup with him and he with me.

If it is anyone who does not understand what's going on its Brother G Truth! If he understood more about love then he would see that we are all one and that includes the Roman Catholics.

Blessings to you and yours

Bubba.

Dear Bubba,

Thanks for the note. I showed Brother G Truth the two scriptures and he disallowed them both. The one in Revelation was not, he said, anything to do with an unbeliever

asking Jesus into his heart. It was, he said, a scripture written to the church. Apparently, this is borne out by the context.

As for the passage in John 3 about being born again, we read through it together and he pointed out there was not one mention of asking Jesus into our hearts. He then asked me again what my hope of heaven was. I told him I had had an experience of the Lord but this time I was careful not to use the expression, "I asked Jesus into my heart". He then shocked me by saying that I could very well go and fellowship with the RC's and Pastor Epop's group for we were basically all hoping and trusting in the same thing.

He went on to explain that God is holy and demands a perfect righteousness from us. But this righteousness can not be found within us. No experience whether religious or life changing can put enough righteousness into us to satisfy God's righteous standard. However, he went on to explain that the righteousness that we needed was to found in Christ alone and could be made ours by faith alone.

He said that it was the failure to grasp this that left Christians open to seduction by false religions such as Catholicism and Pastor Epop's group.

I thought it a bit extreme to call them false religions but he then took me to the book of Galatians and showed me where people who preached another Gospel were actually accursed. He went on to say that he had real and genuine love for the people caught up in these deceptions and because he loved them he was trying to give them the Gospel. According to him, when we hug and embrace these folk and call them brothers in the Lord, this is the very opposite of love for we are helping them along the very road to damnation. If we love them we will, he said, give them the true gospel.

Well Bubba, I need to finish for the moment. I've got to leave town for a few days so there's no point in replying to this till next week.

Blessings

Herschel

Dear Herschel,

Much learning has made Brother G Truth mad. I'm saved because I've had an experience with the Lord. I've had a relationship with him ever since I decided to ask Him into my heart. My friends from the Catholic Church are Catholic Evangelicals. We are evangelicals and so are they so there is no difference.

Brother G Truth says he loves these Catholics and so he should for they are brothers in the Lord. For him to say they need to be evangelized is out of order and obviously a product of a judgmental spirit.

We need to pray for him that He sees the light!

Cheers

Bubba

Dear Bubba,

I do indeed pray for Brother G Truth. I've noticed that he really makes his point with much passion. Perhaps he's becoming un-hinged.

He does however say that he believes in the necessity of regeneration (being born again). Well at least that is one good thing. Then he told me that pastor Epop teaches the same thing as Rome teaches concerning being born again. According to him, they both teach that a baby is born again when it is baptized by the priest.

But he said that that was not the biggest issue. The issue, according to Him was how does a sinful man find right standing before a Holy God. He insists that it never was nor will be through regeneration. He insists that our right standing before God is found not in ourselves but in another, the Lord Jesus. Furthermore, he said that our righteousness is where we need it most. I asked him where that was and he said that our righteousness was in heaven in the person of Christ. That is why Christ can represent us and why the Father can treat us as being already perfected.

Pastor Epop, according to Brother G Truth, along with Rome has twisted the Scriptures and while they praise Christ Jesus they actually plunder Him by denying His finished work at Calvary and his unique position as our mediator.

I don't think I'm making much headway with him. He just doesn't get it.

Blessings

Herschel

Dear Herschel,

Forget about him. He's probably got a bitter spirit. It's obvious that the Roman Catholics are saved. And no I don't mean all of them any more than I would say all Baptists are saved. There are nominal believers in both camps so what's the difference. As for Epop and his lot their claims are outrageous and by them they disqualify

themselves from being accounted as Christians. At least Brother G Truth is right on that one

But do you know what? All this business about doctrine just gives me a headache and leaves me cold.

Blessings

Bubba

Dear Bubba,

I shared you last note with Brother G Truth and he hopes your headache has improved. However he says that you are in grave danger of apostasy because of your failure to take the scriptures seriously. However, he also suspects that you actually have no real clue what Rome is all about so he gave me some quotations from their leader

Cardinal Manning, former head of the Roman Catholics in England writing on behalf of the Pope says: "In Christ's right I am Sovereign. I acknowledge no civil superior: I am the subject of no Prince, and I claim to be the supreme judge on earth, the director of the consciences of men; of the peasant that tills the field and the Prince that sits on the Throne: of the household that sits in the shade of privacy and the legislator that makes laws for the kingdom. I am the last sole supreme judge on earth of what is right and wrong."

Cardinal Heenan, former Archbishop of Westminster, declared: "Ecumenism does not mean pretending that all denominations are equally true; it does not mean that the [Roman] Catholic Church has nothing more than other churches. The ultimate object of ecumenism is to unite all Christians under the Vicar of Christ--the Pope."

He also says that if you have friends who are members of the Church of Rome who say they love Jesus you should tell them to leave and come out from among them. After all, you would do the same if you found friends of yours attaching themselves to pastor Epop's Church. For Brother G Truth the issue is loyalty or disloyalty to the only king and head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessings

Herschel

Dear Bubba,

That man G Truth is a trouble maker. Avoid him. He's got a bad spirit. He's much too dogmatic for his own good. The Pope says he loves Jesus and that's good enough for me. Jesus is my mediator and I'm sure is the Pope's mediator too. End of story.

Blessings

Bubba

Dear Bubba,

Brother G truth says this will be his final word to you. He thanks you for saying he is dogmatic for it reminds Him that his savior was also dogmatic when He said, "I am the way the truth and the Life, no one comes unto the Father but by me. He also says that Paul was dogmatic when he said that there was only ONE mediator. Rome and pastor Epop have two mediators.

According to Brother G Truth, Rome teaches that Mary is the mediator and is also responsible for salvation. This is pure apostasy as it violently attacks the Lord Jesus. Don't say you love Him if you continually attack Him. He asks that you ask God for a teachable spirit. Perhaps God will be kind enough to show you that you the blasphemies of you thinking.

Here's what he asked me to show you.

Leo XIII, in his 'Jucunda Semper', 1894, said, "When Mary offered herself completely to God together with her Son in the temple, she was already sharing with him the painful atonement on behalf of the human race ... (at the foot of cross) she willingly offered him up to the divine justice, dying with him in her heart, pierced by the sword of sorrow."

Pius X, Ad Diem Illum, 1904: "Owing to the union of suffering and purpose existing between Christ and Mary, she merited to become most worthily the reparatrix of the lost world, and for this reason, the dispenser of ALL favors which Jesus acquired for us by his death . . .

Benedict XV, Inter Sodalicia, 1918: "To such extent did Mary suffer and almost die with her suffering and dying Son; to such extent did she surrender her maternal rights over her Son for : man's salvation . . that we may rightly say she redeemed the human race together with Christ."

Plus XI, 1935, in a prayer to close a jubilee, we find Mary declared as a co redeemer with Christ: "O Mother of love and mercy who, when thy sweetest Son was consummating the Redemption of the human race on in the altar of the cross, didst stand next to him suffering with him as a Co-redemptrix."

Plus XII, in a radio broadcast in 1946: "Mary, for having been associated with the King of Martyrs in the ineffable work of human Redemption as Mother and cooperatrix, she remains forever associated with him, with an almost unlimited power, in the distribution of graces which flow from the Redemption."

Paul VI, *Christi Matri*. "The Church ... been accustomed to have recourse to that most ready intercessor, her Mother Mary ... For as St. Irenaeus says, she 'has become the cause of salvation for the whole human race.'"

Pius IX, *Ubi Primum*, 1849: "For God has committed to Mary the treasury of all good things, in order that everyone may know that THROUGH HER are obtained every hope, every grace, and ALL SALVATION. For this is his will, that we obtain everything through Mary."

Leo XIII, *Supremi Apostolatus*, 1883: "O Mary, the guardian of our peace and the dispenser of heavenly graces."

Plus X, *Ad Diem Illum*, 1904: "It was granted to the august Virgin to be together with her Only-begotten Son the most powerful Mediatrix and Conciliatrix of the whole world. So Christ is the source . . . Mary, however, as St. Bernard justly remarks, is the channel, or she is the neck by which the Body is united to the Head... through which ALL spiritual gifts are communicated to his Body."

Benedict XV, In a decree on Joan of Arc: "In every miracle we must recognize the mediation of Mary, through whom, according to God's will, every grace and blessing comes to us."

Plus XI, *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, 1928: "Confiding in her intercession with Jesus, 'the one Mediator of God and man, who wished to associate his own Mother with himself as the advocate of sinners, as the dispenser and mediatrix of grace.'"

Plus XII, *Superiore Anno*, 1940: "As St. Bernard declares, 'it is the will of God that we obtain favors through Mary, let everyone hasten to have recourse to Mary.'"

John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, 1980, "In fact, by being assumed into heaven she has not laid aside the office of salvation but by the manifold intercession she continues to obtain for us the grace of eternal salvation."

Second Vatican Council: "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," no. 56. "The Father of mercies willed that the Incarnation should be preceded by assent on the part of the predestined mother, so that just as a woman had a share in bringing about death, so also a woman should contribute to life. . . . Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of man's salvation through faith and obedience. For, as St. Irenaeus says, she 'being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race.' Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert with him in their preaching: 'the knot of Eve's disobedience was

untied by Mary's obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith."

Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, "She it was who, immune from all sin, personal or inherited, and ever more closely united with her Son, offered him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father together with the holocaust of her maternal rights and motherly love. . . . - -"

Second Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," no. 58. "Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associated herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim which was born of her. - -"

Pope John Paul 2, *Salvifici Doloris*, ". . . it was on Calvary that Mary's suffering, beside the suffering of Jesus, reached an intensity which can hardly be imagined from a human point of view but which was mysteriously and supernaturally fruitful for the Redemption of the world. - -"

Pope John Paul 2, *Salvifici Doloris*, Mary made "a contribution to the Redemption of all----- it was on Calvary that Mary's suffering, beside the suffering of Jesus, reached an intensity which can hardly be imagined from a human point of view but which was mysteriously and supernaturally fruitful for the Redemption of the world.

I told him that you probably wouldn't read so many quotations but he just smiled and said, "If Bubba is hungry for truth he will do his research. If he is not hungry for truth, then he is just a religious man masquerading as a Christian." He wants you to decide Bubba whether or not the Roman Catholic teaching is a direct attack on our wonderful savior. You must choose, he says, whom you will serve. There is no room for compromise.

Just to think, this all got started by running into the new preacher in town. He's not having an easy time of it as people say it's ridiculous that any man could be Christ's visible representative and that Christ has delegated salvation to him to grant or to withdraw. He also, like Rome, believes that all grace is mediated through Mary and by sacraments. People are just not buying all his prayers for the dead and the like.

By the way we are having great meetings at St Bridget's every other Sunday night. The priest there has such a sweet spirit and a great sense of humor. Try to make it over to see us all some time.

Blessings

Herschel

Extent of the Atonement, Miles McKee, 2002

This is a letter in response to a believer of the Arminian persuasion who has an issue with both the extent of the atonement and the actual word "atonement."

Dear Bubba,

Thank you so much for your letter. I am indeed in excellent health and enjoying the Lord immensely and thank you for your kind inquiry.

Regarding the questions under discussion concerning the effectiveness of Christ's death, I have no wish to enter into a polemic that would lead to strife and contention. There is a place, however, for reasoning together ("come now let us reason together saith the Lord" Isa. 1:18) so I therefore propose to try to conduct this discussion in a temperate matter and to answer some of the issues you raised.

The great issue in the believer's life ought to be the exaltation of Christ through the proclamation of the Gospel. Indeed I find the older I grow the less time I have for debate and argument. I'd much rather occupy myself with preaching the gospel.

One final point before I begin is that while I accept, as you point out, human reasoning alone can not determine our doctrinal position, I also believe God does not expect us to cut our heads off in order to read the scripture. The first and great commandment, after all, calls us to worship the Lord with, among other things, 'all our mind'.

If at any time I seem forceful or sarcastic be assured that I am speaking only in concepts and not leveling personal attacks.

The Arminian position, which you repeated to me in your letter and which you obviously hold, is in fact no new invention but rather a re-gurgitation of the old error of semi-Pelagianism. This doctrine gained in popularity in the early 17th century but was thoroughly condemned as heresy by the Reformers at the Synod of Dort in 1618. (I might add that the Papal church embraced semi-Pelagianism at a very early stage of her development, and as such, no Protestant who had been freed from her tyranny would easily have embraced this view).

The Pelagian/Arminian view is that man has the ability to respond to the gospel at any time he wishes. This view proclaims a Christ who did nothing more by His redeeming work than make it possible for us to save ourselves by believing. (Their preachers don't always say it as clearly as that but in reality that's what it boils down to). Redemption, according to this point of view, did not redeem; rather it merely gives us the possibility of redemption. God's love is reduced to a general willingness to receive those who respond

"properly" to his message. The Gospel of Christ is not seen as the power of God unto Salvation since it actually has no power in and of itself to save unless a depraved and fallen rebel son of Adam wills it to save. The Father and the Son are depicted not in splendid Sovereignty, but in subjection to the wishes of sinful man. He is a God who wills for every individual to be saved but, when it comes right down to it, has no ability to save without their assistance. God, according to the Arminian, does not sovereignly draw men unto His Son by His Spirit, but rather waits in quiet impotence at the door of their hearts, wistfully waiting for them to let Him in. This is then how Arminian preaching actually presents God and as such the Bible is firmly against it.

(By the way, I would say at this point that I'm not on a crusade to establish people as Calvinists. I'm not a 'card carrying' Calvinist, as I don't believe everything John Calvin taught. As a believer, however, I am honour bound to defend the Glory of God. Also I want to stress I have arrived at this view of the atonement by thorough Bible Study and not by reading John Calvin. I will also admit that as I began to understand the extent of the atonement, I did not like what I was beginning to see the Bible as teaching. But why should that matter? God does not ask me to like what He does, rather what he expects from me is to accept what He does. He is the potter, I am the clay, and shall the clay argue with the potter about how he does things - see Paul thoughts on this in Romans 9.

But I digress, back to what I was saying. These Arminian positions which you hold merely glorify man, exalt man's will and as such are humanism in a nicely pressed religious dress. While claiming man's right to become a member of the Bride of Christ at will, Arminians deny the Father His right to choose a bride (for His Son) at will. Such arrogance! Leave it to man and he'll set himself up against God every time!

Further, as I have studied this Arminian position (which I once held) I have seen it holds to, among other things, the following propositions:

- 1) Man is not so depraved or so completely ruined by the Fall that he cannot savingly believe the Gospel when presented to him. Therefore the Fall did not ruin him completely.
- 2) Man is never in a position where He can not resist the Holy Ghost. God can never conquer him without his willing compliance and consent. God's purpose and word is therefore not invincible.
- 3) God's choice of those who are saved is based on His foreknowledge and foreseeing of those who of their own accord respond to the Gospel.
- 4) Christ's death did not guarantee the salvation of anyone. It did not accomplish salvation for anyone nor did it secure the gift of faith (for such a gift does not exist). What it did was rather to create a possibility of salvation for everybody if they believe.
- 5) It is the responsibility of the believer to keep himself in the faith once he has believed.

Overall, this wretched doctrine makes man's salvation dependent on himself and presents saving faith as man's own work and not God's.

I don't intend to address all these points listed above as all were not raised in your letter. Further, I do not have the time available for such an endeavor. For more than adequate answers I would refer you to "The Works of John Owen," Vol. 10, especially the sections "A Display of Arminianism" and "The Death of Death In The Death Of Christ."

Owen, one of the leading Puritan theologians, has not yet been answered or refuted in his defense of the Doctrine of 'Particular Redemption'.

But to the matter at hand: The Bible presents a God who saves and not a God who enables man to save himself.

Here then is the "bible" according to the Arminians:

"Fear not for I have made it possible for you to be redeemed I have potentially called you by my name" Isa 43:1 ... compare that one with the real Bible (and by the way read this verse in the K.J.V. or any translation of the Textus Receptus and not in one of the smorgasbord translations which jump from manuscript to manuscript to find a word which suits the ideas of their translators).

"For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel thy potential Saviour" Isa. 43:3

"I even I am the Lord and beside me there is no Saviour, except, that is, for those who were spiritual enough to respond to me and thereby save themselves so, just in case you were wondering, I'm not therefore the only Saviour" Isa 43:11

"I have declared and have saved ... well actually, not really; I have made it possible to be saved" Isa. 43:12

"I will work and who will let (prevent) it apart from anyone and everyone who wants to prevent me accomplishing my will" (Isa. 43:13)

"They have not known nor understood for He hath shut their eyes that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand ... Just kidding!" Isa 44:18

I could cite numerous scriptures which declare God to be the Saviour, yet can not find one scripture which, when taken in its context, says that man is to undertake or partner in his eternal redemption.

I'm sure, in reality, you do believe that God is your Saviour. Certainly, at least, you do so when you are in prayer. I'm sure you don't pray by saying "Thank you Lord for saving me and thank you ME for making the right choice." Something strange however happens when you and your fellow Arminians get off your knees and onto your feet for then your thinking suddenly reverses and you once more become contributors to your redemption.

But why don't you try praying in a consistent manner with your theology? I challenge you to get on your knees and thank God that you made the right choice in this matter of salvation. Thank Him that you are not as other men who did not have the insight and spiritual inclination to accept Him as Saviour. You really ought to reward yourself ... Oh no, you don't have to, since God will reward you with Heaven because of your choice of Him. But then again if it's a reward, it's not grace!

You don't seem to believe in Christ plus nothing but rather in Christ plus your choice of Christ.

Alas, you should cut Eph 2:8 out of your Bible. You remember that verse? "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourself it is the gift of God." You obviously don't believe that scripture, if your letter to me was sincere, for you very much believe salvation is of yourself ... it's because of your will and your choice. Faith, for you, is an act of the will rather than a grace gift from God.

And verse 9 of Eph.2 equally does not apply to the card carrying Arminian for it says "Not of works lest any man should boast." But if you get to Heaven by your choice and your will then you will have grounds for boasting. Mind you, you'll be the odd man out for the redeemed will join in the Heavenly anthem "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood" (Rev 5:9). And you'll be duty bound to say "What nonsense is this? He only made it possible for me to be redeemed. He didn't actually redeem me at the cross. My redemption didn't take place until I believed." Maybe some kind saint of God will then put his hand on your shoulder and point out the relationship between "slain" and "redeemed". Slaying and actual redeeming happened same time, same place.

Nor will you be able to agree with John when he says "Unto Him who washed us and cleansed us by His blood be Glory and honour and praise." Your song will be, if you stay true to your theology, "unto Him that made it possible for me to be washed and cleansed by His blood."

Your Christ doesn't actually redeem by the blood which was shed on Calvary. That blood, according to your thinking, only made redemption possible.

Furthermore, your Christ, the Christ of the Arminians, was doing nothing on the cross. His finished work finished nothing! Your Christ, according to your theory, could actually have been the biggest failure in history for He could have come to this earth and accomplished nothing. No one might actually have gotten saved. Maybe, and it is just possible, no one would have chosen to believe in Christ.

This kind of Christ, however, seems far removed from the Sovereign God who said His word would not return unto him void but would accomplish that which He pleased and prosper in the thing whereunto it was sent (Isa. 55:11). If Christ's death accomplished redemption for no one in particular then he came into the world for no one in particular and for no particular purpose. He was like a boxer going into the ring just for the sake of being there but not for the purpose of winning.

A Christ who comes with no particular purpose!!!!!! The idea is too far fetched! We should then read Lk.19:10 as saying ... "I have come perhaps to seek and to try to save that which was lost" rather than "I have come to seek and to save that which was lost." (By the way, and I digress, you might as well drop "Amazing Grace" from your repertoire of Hymns since no good Arminian could admit to being so lost and so blind that he couldn't find his way. It wasn't grace which saved you but rather your choice of and proper response to that grace.)

Don't sing it if you don't believe it!

The Bible, however, presents us with a God who is both Maker and King. Old Spurgeon said it well, and I paraphrase, "Arminians, it seems, don't mind a God who potters around in His workshop creating occasional worlds and planets, but when He ascends to His Throne and purposes to save His people and choose a family and Bride, then they lift their voices in protest crying 'freewill freewill' and try to exercise some supposed veto on the Almighty."

The Bible presents us also with a Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father chooses, the Son fulfills the Father's will by redeeming these people and The Spirit reveals this redemption and draws these men and women invincibly to salvation. The God of the Bible saves from beginning to end. He is the Author and the Finisher of faith. He is the one who calls to Salvation and whom He calls He also Justifies and whom He Justifies he also Glorifies (see Rom 8:30). Evidently you don't believe Rom 8:30 either, for you tell me He calls everyone, but only justifies those who exercise their free will and faith correctly. But read that verse carefully and yes ... think about it! Whom He calls He justifies and glorifies. If people don't end up justified (saved) and glorified (in Heaven) then obviously they weren't called. Why? For whom He called He justified, etc.

You would do well to distinguish between the general call which can be resisted (God commands all men to repent ... but they don't) and the effectual call which can not be resisted (exemplified in Zacchaeus, Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened," and Saul of Tarsus).

Go ahead then cut Rom.8:30 out of the Bible and while you are at it take the scissors to Rom 9:15 where salvation is presented as "not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God That sheweth mercy." You and your friends, in true humanist fashion, take issue with the Almighty for you insist that salvation is indeed of him that willeth. God's mercy only comes, you say, when you 'will' His salvation.

The God of the Bible is the Saving God. Sinners do not save themselves, no not even slightly. Salvation, first and last, whole and entire, past, present and future, is of the Lord, to whom be Glory forever and ever. Alas the god of the Arminians, by his puny redemption, only secured the right for God to make the offer of salvation. The Arminian redemption actually redeems no one and ensures salvation for no one. Christ's death only created an opportunity for the exercise of saving faith and no more. But this is a far cry

from that which is presented in the Bible. Paul says "the Son of God loved me and gave His life for me" (Gal.2:20). This is no general redemption he speaks of but rather of a particular love and mercy. Christ actually saved at the cross. He actually became a real (not potential) substitute at the cross. He effected a real (not potential) reconciliation at the cross. Our title to eternal life was secured at the cross. " ... He entered in once into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb.9:12). The Cross and Christ's subsequent intercession, based on that work at the cross are a double guarantee that all who have this title will be brought to faith and their salvation made actual.

The Christ of the Cross saved us when he hung on the Cross. No Arminian could admit this! The Arminian, however, pays lip-service to the cross and says "Without Calvary I could not have gained my salvation" ... Well good for you, give yourself a biscuit! The genuine Grace believer, on the other hand says "Christ gained my salvation at Calvary." Again, and once more I digress, I hope you don't sing the hymn:

"My Jesus I love Thee, I know Thou art Mine" for there's a verse in there that should make you choke; it says ...

"I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me, And purchased my pardon when nailed to the tree"

... Don't sing it if you don't believe it!

The Bible reveals God's power to save, not His impotence. His salvation is not a hypothetical one for hypothetical believers. It is a real redemption and an effectual salvation accomplished by a Saviour who actually saved sinners on the cross.

Fallen man can not bear to face the fact that he is not master of his destiny and captain of his own soul. He can not bear to face the fact that the God of the Bible saves and that He saves those He has chosen to save. He detests to think that He saves by Grace apart from any and all works so that no man may boast even slightly. He is so blind he can not see that salvation comes to him in the person of a perfect Saviour and that this whole salvation flows to him from the Cross where the work of redemption was finished.

The death of Christ was not a mere ineffectual wish on God's part, depending for its fulfillment on man's willingness to believe. The cross of Christ really does save. Its saving power does not depend on faith being added to it; rather its saving power is such that faith flows from it. The cross secured full salvation for all for whom Christ died. Grace believers wholeheartedly, therefore join with Paul when he says "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal.6:14).

So far from magnifying the love and grace of God, the Arminian position turns redemption into a monumental failure. God is dishonoured and His purpose turned into an impotent wish. No Arminian who understands his theological position could ever say "Christ died for me." But, as in prayer so in his giving of testimony he will not admit his "Self-Saviour" position and claims that Christ has indeed died for him. Were he to testify

of his self-saviourhood, not one of the listening redeemed, in their hearts, could agree with him. But he likes to have it both ways. He calls God his Saviour while at the same time claiming he wouldn't have been saved at all had he not made the proper response to the gospel. In other words, by his choice and free will he enabled God to become his Saviour. God was only his Saviour in that God was willing to save. God however was not able to save until He got the nod and the wink from the fallen, cursed, depraved and spiritually dead son of Adam. So the sinner, according to the logic of this position, in actuality enabled God to become the Saviour. Sounds to me that the the believer, if you are right in your position, should be held to be a co-Saviour with the Almighty. Come to think of it, perhaps we ought to stop referring to God as Almighty since that designation obviously should not apply to one who can not save without our help.

But back to the extent of the atonement. Perhaps this is a time to ask what kind of sophistry is this you propose when you say that the blood of Christ did not atone for there is, you say, no atonement in the New Testament. It's a clever sounding argument you put forward until one looks at what you say.

Atonement, you should know, if you are going to enter the lists, was a word coined by William Tyndale when he translated the Bible in AD 1526. There was at that time no word in the English language which meant reconciliation. Tyndale had to coin one such word: at-one-ment. This word came then to stand for the benefits which Christ brings to believers through his death on the cross. But, you say the word does not appear in the New Testament! What is it doing then in Romans 5:11 " ... we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we now receive the atonement." Here it stands for reconciliation (a word now commonly used today).

God indeed had no pleasure in the Old Testament sacrifices. Their effectiveness was only partial being accepted only in as much as they pointed to and typified the coming Saviour and his saving work. The atonement of the Old Testament was merely a shadow ... But a shadow of necessity must be a shadow of a substance or, better yet, a shadow of a reality. It's odd to me that you accept the atonement as a shadow in the Old and not as a reality in the New, for indeed the shadow could not even have existed in the Old if there was no actual reality yet to come in the New. To say there is no atonement in the New Testament is as daft as saying there is no Mercy Seat in the New Testament. Now I'm sure you wouldn't say such a thing for you well know that, although the literal mercy seat did not survive, Christ is our New Testament Mercy Seat. In the Old, the Mercy Seat was a shadow of the reality to come and again I say it could not have been a shadow except it was a shadow of a coming reality.

Once more you, if you really in your heart hold the position you stated, are bound to stand in silence when the rest of us rise to sing "Man of sorrows what a name." It's verse three against which you are bound to cavil ...

'Guilty, vile and helpless we

Spotless lamb of God was he

"Full Atonement" can it be?

Hallelujah! What a Saviour'

Don't sing it if you don't believe it!

But back to the extent of the atonement. If Christ died for every individual, then every individual will be saved unless, that is, there was no saving power in that death. Yet the Arminian says he died for every individual, while at the same time holding that he died for no one in particular. Why doesn't he clarify his position and stop speaking out of both sides of his mouth?

In his attempt to magnify the saving grace and mercy of God the Arminian says redeeming love extends to every man and Christ has died to save every man. Then to avoid universalism (the belief that everyone goes to Heaven) he says that nothing Christ has done actually saves without us adding something to it. The decisive factor in salvation therefore becomes our believing. According to this theory then, faith becomes the Saviour rather than the means of receiving the salvation which was accomplished on our behalf at Calvary.

He criticizes the Reformed believer for limiting the scope of the Atonement while at the same time himself limiting the power of Atonement. And all the while singing with Cowper ...

"Dear dying Lamb Thy precious blood
Will never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more"

A "ransomed" church? Don't sing it if you don't believe it!

When dealing with the Death of Christ we need to know (1) what God intended by it and (2) what was accomplished by it.

Jesus, who both knew his own mind and the secrets of the Father, told us what his particular purpose here on earth was when He announced He had "come to save that which was lost" (Matt 18:11). The Apostles also proclaimed this divine intention for Paul tells us "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" (1Tim1:15).

Which sinners are these? The ones of whom Jesus spoke in Matt 20:28 "The Son of Man came.....to give his life a ransom for MANY." This "many" is in other places called "us" to distinguish the redeemed from the world. He "gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal.1:4). We are told, also, that His death was for a particular group for we read in

Eph.5:25-27 "Christ ... loved the church (not every individual) and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing " ... Again in Titus 2:14 "He gave Himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous for good works."

Hey do you know what? It sounds like God had a purpose in all this after all, namely to save us, deliver us, wash us and make us holy and zealous for good works. Not just to make it possible if we added our two cents worth, but to actually do it. But the God of the Arminians doesn't seem to have the will, purpose or the ability to even get to first base. He can't even save without our help.

Then we must ask, what did Christ's death accomplish?

Among other things, the first thing it did was to accomplish reconciliation (at-one-ment) between us and God. Rom 5:10 says "When we were His enemies we (not all individuals) were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Again, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5:19). And we'll look at your misinterpretation of that word "world" upon which you base so much of your argument in just a moment. But back to the matter at hand ...

Redemption was also obtained "He redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us" (Gal.3:13).

Also Justification "we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom.3:23).

Sanctification was obtained for we read "to sanctify the people with his own blood he suffered outside the gate" (Heb.13:12).

If the Arminian position is true and Christ's death is for all individuals then all individuals must be reconciled, redeemed, justified and sanctified or else, as stated earlier, Christ's death is only a toy death void of all power and particular purpose. Nothing was intended by it and nothing accomplished.

Do you suppose God is like the men of Babel who intended to build a tower to Heaven and purposed that its top would reach heaven? In spite of their best intentions, they could not perform the task. Is this what God is really like? He wants to save, but can't without permission.

Why was the Tower of Babel not built? It's simple, God was not willing for it to be built. He over ruled the will of men and placed his veto on their activities.

Is it not strange to you that in the Bible we see The Sovereign Omnipotent ruler of the universe thwarting the purposes of sinful men and yet today you would have us believe

that the positions are reversed and sinful men may at will thwart the very purpose and intentions of an all powerful God?

Well then, let's look at John Owen's three propositions to which, if I remember correctly, you seem to take exception.

He said only one of the following three propositions could be true:

- 1) Christ died for all of the sins of all men
- 2) Christ died for some of the sins of all men.
- 3) Christ died for all of the sins of some men.

If it is proposition #2 which is true then all men will have sins to answer for and no one will be saved. For "If the Lord should mark iniquities who should stand" (Ps.130:3).

If proposition #1 is correct why then do men go to Hell? "For unbelief and not for their sins since their sin have already been paid for" you say. Interesting! Since when has unbelief been taken off the register of sins? Israel, as I recall, suffered greatly by the sin of unbelief (Rom.11:20).

Is unbelief no longer a sin today? If it is not a sin how can it be the cause of eternal ruin and damnation. According to you, men are sent to Hell for something that is not even a sin. If, however, you admit unbelief as a sin, then you can't consent to proposition #1.

Surely the Bible speaks of unbelief being equated with things evil for it talks of an evil heart of unbelief which departs from the Living God (Heb.3:12).

"They reject the free gift of salvation" you say "that's why they go to Hell. They don't go to Hell for their sins, as they are already paid for." What manner of madness is this? Since when is rejection of Christ not a sin? It cost, as I mentioned, the Jewish nation dearly. Since when has the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost (rejection of Christ) become something which God winks at? And since when did we discover that God doesn't send people to Hell because of sin? Who made this discovery? What was his name? I'd like to ask him where he got his information. It was certainly not found in the Bible!

That sinners are punished in hell for and because of their sins is evident for ...

"The wicked shall be turned into Hell" Ps. 9:17

The guests of the immoral woman are in the depths of Hell (Prov. 9:18). Why are they in Hell? For their wickedness? Not according to your theory, for you insist no one goes to Hell because of sin as Jesus has died for the sins of everyone. Yet the Bible warns that the very act of going into a prostitute leads to Hell. But this can not be so if Christ has paid for that sin!! And thus we must conclude you to be right and the Bible wrong. Not!

"And if thy right eye offend thee pluck it out ... for it is profitable for you that one of thy members perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell" (Matt.5:29). Is this saying that the only way to end in Hell is for not accepting the gospel? Far from it, your body can be the cause of Hell deserving sin according to this verse!

"The Son of man shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and all that do iniquity and shall cast them into a furnace of fire ... so shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just and shall cast them into the furnace of fire ..." (Matt.13:41,42,49).

The wicked, in those verses, are the ones "who do iniquity." If you argue that the iniquity is their rejection of Christ (which interpretation the text will not allow) you are still left with rejection of Christ being designated as iniquity - a much stronger word than sin! So either way your theory, that no one goes to Hell for sin, crumbles like the straw man it is.

"But the fearful and unbelieving and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev.2:18). But that scripture is an impossibility, if your theory is true, for you say Christ has already paid the price for lying and sorcery and whore-mongering!

How odd that Christ paid for everybody's sins yet here we read of people for whom you say Christ died being hauled off to the Lake of fire to be punished for those same sins. Obviously, if your theory is true, God has no concept of Justice since the sin is being paid for twice. Not only did God punish Christ for these wretched sins he also takes the actual sinner who committed them and punishes him also. Amazing! Is there no end to this fury? It must be that God was not satisfied with the death of His Son. And Christ was obviously mistake when he cried out at the cross "It is finished." It is finished means, in modern jargon, "Mission Accomplished" ... but if your theory is true then nothing is accomplished.

Think about it my friend and don't let pride cause you to defend a position for no other reason than it's your position.

But we must continue. Proposition 3 is the only one which withstands Biblical scrutiny.

Why So? First, let us consider Christ in His office of Mediator. As you well know the book of Hebrews makes it clear that Christ's intercession is based upon His finished work of Calvary for "Christ being come an High priest of good things to come, ... by His own blood entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb.9:11-12). Notice, He OBTAINED eternal redemption for us at the cross and then embarked on His High Priestly ministry of mediation for us.

Where did he go with His blood? "He is not entered into holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of

God for us" (Heb.9:24). Mark this down, He is the High Priest for everyone for whom He died. He is appearing in Heaven for all those He redeemed.

His very act of death (His oblation) was done as a High Priest - "Nor yet that He should offer himself often as the High Priest entereth into the Holy place every year with blood of others; ... but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb.9:25-26). If he died for everyone's sins, He is therefore everyone's High Priest.

Further, as our High priest in Heaven, He intercedes to ensure all the benefits of His death are applied to those for whom He died. This is the purpose of His intercession. This intercession continues till we reach Glory and is brought into effect even now for we read "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1John2:1).

It is evident from scripture that all for whom He died must have the benefits of His death applied to them. But if your theory holds true, Christ, as High priest, is not able to effectively apply all the benefits of His death to each of those for whom He died. According to you there are many for whom He died who will never enjoy the benefits of that death. Thus you hold that Christ is an ineffective High Priest.

But how can we be so sure His intercession is effective? How do we know He is an effective High Priest?

First we must ask, does the Father pay attention to Christ's prayers? Well, unless Christ was lying when He said to the Father, "I know that thou heareth me always" (Jn.11: 42) we can be assured that His intercession is comprehensive, powerful and effective. Furthermore we discover that "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb.7: 25). That means everyone for whom He intercedes as High Priest will be saved. In other words the people for whom He intercedes will have the benefits of Calvary applied to them.

Does Christ intercede for everyone? Well actually no! He point blank refused to pray for the world! "I pray not for the world but for them thou hast given me" (Jn.17: 9). Are we to believe then that Christ died for men for whom He refuses to pray? I can't get my head round that one! That would make Him only half a High Priest because He neglects a major part of His role.

If you think He died for people for whom He does not afterwards interceded then you must think redemption is so undervalued in Christ's eyes that He could pour out His precious blood without any care taken of what happens afterwards to those for whom He shed that blood! If He intercedes for every individual then every individual will be saved if indeed He's any kind of High Priest.

But the Arminian High Priest is an ineffectual advocate who is not able to save everyone for whom He died. He's not one to be trusted for He's neglectful of His office and

obviously has no real will to save. After all the Father hears Him always. And this is not surprising since the Father and the Son are One thus making disagreement between them impossible. Furthermore, Christ always prays according to the will of God since He is God. Yet you would have me believe that He is High Priest for the millions who will perish.

How can that happen? Well maybe the Father doesn't really hear Him - that's impossible! Or maybe His requests are refused - again impossible. Or maybe He's praying out of the will of God - impossible. Well then what? Obviously, if you and the Arminian/Humanist bunch are right and millions perish for whom Christ died, there's an insincerity or ineffectiveness about Christ's intercession. If news of this ever gets out to the Christ haters they will have a field day!

Actually the truth is that the people who perish, perish because Christ is not their High Priest. Let's look briefly at the some aspects of the work of Christ as a High Priest.

As a High Priest he offered Himself as a sacrifice for sins and to intercede, by appearing in the presence of God, for those for whom He has died.

If people perish it's because Christ hasn't prayed for them. If He doesn't intercede for them its because He hasn't died for them.

Listen to the New Testament, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom.8: 33-34).

If every individual is elect, then Christ intercedes for every individual. If every individual is elect, everyone now living can, with confidence, be assured that Christ is interceding for them and that no one, according to this scripture, shall lay anything to their charge. But we know that those who perish have plenty laid to their charge ... So how can you say Christ died for them? If he died for them why didn't He pray for them?

Furthermore, it is the Father's purpose for Christ to bring many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10) and to this end Christ prayed "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am" (Jn.17:24). In that great chapter of Jn.17 Christ prays for His own. Who are His own? The same ones who were given to Him by the Father. Who are they who were given to Him? The same ones for whom He died and the same ones for whom He appears in the presence of God with His own blood. But which ones are these? Does the scripture mean everyone who ever lived? If it does, then The Father's gift to the Son and Christ's intercession are both ineffectual. Why? Because, since multitudes perish in Hell, the Father's gift and the Son's intercession obviously don't guarantee anything.

In case you didn't pick up on the inseparable link in Hebrews between Christ's death and His priestly and effective mediation on behalf of His people; let me direct your attention to the prophesy of Isa.53:11 when the Spirit moved the great Seer to write: "By His

knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many for he shall bear their iniquities." That His mission to the cross was to be a success was also prophesied and guaranteed in verse 12 of the same chapter " ... and He was numbered with the transgressors and He bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors."

Now we need to ask for which transgressors did he intercede ? Was it for every transgressor who ever lived? No! The answer is in the text! He interceded only for the ones whose sin he bore ... and they are here called "many". These verses put to flight the notion of universal redemption, but are ignored by the humanist who wants to honour his own image of his self-created God.

Lest there be any doubt the benefits of Christ's death are applied to those for whom He died, Isa. 53:5 further tells us "and with His stripes we are healed."

But why aren't all healed spiritually if this verse is true? Why do men yet perish? Is it because Christ's oblation and intercession are ineffective? Such a notion blasphemes God and imputes to Him both impotence and lack of particular purpose. I don't know of a better way to subtly make a sham of the cross than to hold to such a theory as yours which limits the power, intentions and purpose of God.

Also, Rom 8:32 must also be considered at this time. It says, "He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things." According to this verse, all for whom He died will have the benefits of His death given to them. You don't believe me? Read the verse again!

Here these benefits are called "all things." This again is a declaration of the power of Christ's intercession. To say, however, that He died for every individual leaves us with the question "Why does He not give every individual grace and glory?" After all, God delivered Christ for our offences but, according to you, nothing was effectively and actually accomplished by that.

According to you, Christ's offering at Calvary, is of no avail unless we sinful rebels who were dead in sin and iniquity added our two cents worth (our acceptance of the offer) to the equation.

Your whole theory reminds me of the Popish fable of St. Denys. According to Rome, this great man was martyred by some angry pagans who, infuriated by his preaching, cut off his head . Undeterred, the mighty Denys stood up, picked up his head and walked 500 miles to a site where finally stopping and admitting he was dead, he collapsed. And there, on that very site, they built a church, which I'm told stands today, to commemorate and perpetuate his noble memory and achievement.

Now why do I have a problem believing that story? Do I have difficulty believing he could walk 500 miles with his head under his arm? No not at all! That's not the problem I have. My problem is believing he could take the first step after having his head severed from his body. The man was dead at that point. After all if he could take the first step

then 500 miles would be a thing of nothing for a man like that. My problem is, I just can't believe a dead man can get up and take the first step.

Which brings me back to your theory. I just can't see how a dead man can add anything to the saving work of Christ. How can a dead man make a decision? How can a dead man make the right choice? Yet you say he can, even though the scripture plainly says we were dead before salvation "and you hath He quicken who were DEAD in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1).

But back to the main thought. If every individual is not saved, and Christ died for every individual, we must conclude Christ to be a failed High Priest whose prayers are ineffective. Or, on the other hand, we must conclude, He has no influence in Heaven, or perhaps the Father does not hear Him.

Mind you no believer who thought that way would dare to pray, for where would his confidence be? To pray successfully we must come to the Father in the mighty name of Jesus in full confidence that our High Priest has the ear of His Father and that His Father always hears Him.

But I must proceed.

You base much of your argument on the word WORLD. By this term you assume the Bible means every individual who has ever lived. If that is what it means then it means that every time it is used. But let scripture interpret scripture and let's see if your theory holds water.

Matt 16:26 "For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul." Are we then to understand this to mean what does it profit a man if he gains every individual who has ever lived?

LK 2:21 "And ... there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed." Are we to understand by this that every individuals who had ever lived or even every individual alive on planet earth at that time was to be taxed? Not everyone alive lived in the Roman Empire. (Here the word world refers to the known Roman World and excludes all the people in China. It certainly does not mean every individual alive at that time).

Jn. 12:19 "The Pharisees said....behold the whole world is gone after him." Again you can see this does not mean every individual alive in A.D.33. Not every individual then alive was in Jerusalem at that time.

Jn 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you not as the world giveth give I unto you." Need I ask it? Does every individual who has ever lived give some kind of inferior peace to us?

Acts 19:27 "Diana...whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." Is that a fact? This must mean all the Chinese and Pygmies worshiped her if World means every individual.

Acts 24:5 "A mover of sedition among the Jews throughout the whole world." Where was this whole world? Was Paul inciting the Jews in Japan and Mexico to sedition ... or does the world in this verse mean an area around the Mediterranean ?

Rom 1:8 "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Did every single person then alive on the planet speak of the faith of the Roman Christians? Did even every person in the Roman Empire speak of their faith?

The point I am making here is that the word world is an ambiguous term with many and varied meanings. You simply can not attribute one meaning (i.e., every individual) otherwise it will be a screwball Bible doctrine you come up with.

In Acts 17:24 the word world stands for the whole created universe (not individuals)

In Jn 13:1 world stands for the earth (As in Eph 1:4) (not individuals)

In Jn 12:31 it is used for this "world-system" (not individuals)

In Rom 3:19 it is used for every individual

In John 15:18 it is used for humanity minus believers (Therefore not every individual who ever lived)

Rom 11:12 it is used of the Gentile world as opposed to Jewish world (therefore not every individual)

In John 3:16; "God so loved the World" is a reference to the non-exclusive nature of this new covenant. In other words, God has burst out of the confines of Israel and is now the new Covenant God of both Jew and Gentile (the whole world). It is not a statement that Christ died for every individual.

In Jn. 6:33-35 world is used for every believer.

In John 12:47-48 it is again evident that world refers to the world of believers.

Well my friend, I've written enough on this and will try to send this letter off. Due to the nature of my work I have only been able to write occasionally in response to you. However I trust there's enough in what I said to give you food for thought.

Till He Comes

Miles