

## **“Calvinist Pesticides” or Innocuous Drivel?**

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Recently I received from a friend a series of articles written by another pastor with the title “Calvinist Pesticides.” In these articles, the author attempts to “overthrow” the basic doctrines of grace that are the very heart, core, and fiber of our Baptist heritage. I was somewhat amused as I read the attempts as it became readily apparent the author knows little of what he speaks and is unable to articulate correctly the doctrines he tries to oppose. Before attempting to “overthrow” another’s doctrine it would seem wise to have studied and come to an understanding of what those doctrines are. That be as it may, I feel a responsibility to respond and correct the obvious errors.

The article begins with a tactic commonly used by those who have less than stable ground to stand on. If you can’t “overthrow” the opponent’s doctrine, then begin by attacking his character. Calvinists are described as “obnoxious nuisances” and “pseudo-intellectuals.” The author should be careful not to become what he accuses others of being. I am particularly intrigued by the use of the word “pseudo-intellectuals” to describe those who hold the doctrines of grace. As I write this in my office, I look to my right and on the shelves are 50 volumes of Spurgeon’s sermons beginning with the New Park Street Pulpit printed in 1887.

Spurgeon wrote, “There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith, without works; nor unless we preach the sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the special and particular redemption of His elect and chosen people which Christ wrought out upon the cross; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation.” (A Defense of Calvinism)

Spurgeon’s words carry no weight because, of course, he is a “pseudo-intellectual.” On the shelves directly in front of me I see other works of Spurgeon including “The Treasury of the Bible,” and “The Treasury of David.” Probably of not much value since they were written by a “pseudo-intellectual.” Beneath that is a set of commentaries by Albert Barnes, who as we all know, was a “pseudo-intellectual.” Beside his commentaries are the classic set of Jamison, Fausset, and Brown. “Pseudo-intellectuals,” I might add. Below those works are the commentaries of John Gill and his magnum opus “A Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity.” One of his other works “The Cause of God and Truth” in which he engages and defeats Arminianism and establishes the doctrines of grace as being the doctrines held by our earliest church fathers, stands beside. Gill has been called the greatest Baptist scholar and commentator of all time. But alas, Gill was nothing but a “pseudo-intellectual.” Next to Gill are the commentaries of Matthew Poole another “pseudo-intellectual.” Below Gill on the next shelf is that rascal “pseudo-intellectual” Matthew Henry. Please inform Baptist pastors across the country to rid themselves of this “obnoxious” pest because the author of “Calvinist Pesticides”

has declared him a “pseudo-intellectual.” Beneath Henry is Alexander Maclaren a contemporary of that other “pseudo-intellectual” Spurgeon. Moving to the left are Systematic Theologies by Augustus Strong, A.A. Hodge, R.L. Dabney, Charles Hodge, James Pettigru Boyce, John L. Dagg, and Thomas Watson. There are a couple of doctors of theology from Princeton, one from Rochester, and two early founders of Southern Baptists seminaries mixed in that group, but of course, they all fit nicely under the moniker “pseudo-intellectuals.” These are but a few of the “pseudo-intellectuals” the author of “Calvinist Pesticides” has “overthrown.”

I suppose the most disheartening thing to learn from the author of “Pesticides” is that our beloved King James Version of the Bible was translated by “pseudo-intellectuals.” Each time I pick up my Bible to read or preach I must wonder, according to this author, whether the translators were actually qualified for their task. Has their translation been tainted by Calvinistic bias? Perhaps that is why the King James Version is so clear in declaring the doctrines of election and predestination. This is in fact one of the claims made by “intellectuals” who disparage the KJV. What we expect from “pseudo-intellectuals” is a grossly inferior product. Perhaps the author would prefer we use a more “scholarly” translation.

The author speaks of Calvin’s “wilted T.U.L.I.P.,” but I am sure he is aware that Calvin does not own that acronym. Calvin did not personally formulate it and it did not come into use until about 50 years after Calvin’s death. To call it Calvin’s T.U.L.I.P. is inaccurate to say the least. Today, theological systems are either Calvinistic or Arminian and the terms do not apply to individuals. As Spurgeon aptly wrote “Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else.” When I speak of Calvinism, I can only speak of my views of the gospel and the misunderstandings of the author of “Calvinist Pesticides” about what those doctrines mean and contain, I cannot answer. He, to a large degree, frames his arguments according to his misunderstandings and the result is an attack on beliefs Calvinists do not hold. Therefore the arguments will be answered from my point of view, which agree with the most widely used Baptist Confessions of Faith.

I would like to examine the statements made by the author to correct inaccuracies that reflect on the doctrines of grace and to show his misapplication and exegesis of scripture.

The author states: “Here are the verses that topple the bloated (“knowledge puffeth up”, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 8:1) superstructure of Calvinism:

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:2 = ‘Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.’ The Holy Spirit was sanctified (set apart) by the Father to draw all men to Christ.’ (“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” – 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:5-6) Salvation is based on obedience to the call of the Gospel. Those who respond positively to Jesus Christ have their souls sprinkled by the blood of Christ. They are cleansed of sin; they are saved. These are the ‘elect’.”

I am not sure if the author means his statement, “The Holy Spirit was sanctified (set apart) by the Father to draw all men to Christ,” to be an explanation of Peter’s words, “through sanctification

of the Spirit.” It is true the work of the Holy Spirit is to convict men of their sins and draw them to Christ. However, the sanctification in this verse does not apply to the Holy Spirit but to the elect. The author may want to check A.T. Robertson’s “Word Pictures in the New Testament” where Robertson states: “The subjective genitive here, sanctification wrought by the Spirit as in 2 Th 2:13.” Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:13:

“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:”

The statements of 1 Peter 1:2 and 2 Thessalonians 2:13 are similar and those who are sanctified *by* the Holy Spirit (not the Holy Spirit sanctified by the Father) are the elect chosen “from the beginning.”

The last statement in this paragraph by the author, “Those who respond positively to Jesus Christ have their souls sprinkled by the blood of Christ. They are cleansed of sin; they are saved. These are the ‘elect’,” is certainly a true statement. Those who are saved are none but the elect whom Paul says were “chosen from the beginning.” It is not hard to determine which “beginning” Paul speaks of for he defines it in Ephesians 1:4:

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:”

Next, the author quotes 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:7-8.

“Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”

His comments are: “Total depravity? Unconditional election? Limited atonement? Irresistible grace? It is clear from these verses that some men, though sinners, do voluntarily believe on Jesus Christ. Others voluntarily reject Christ. Since Christ was given for “the world” (John 3:16-18), anyone in the world who will obey the Gospel will be saved. Those who disobey the Gospel are lost – and it’s their own fault. They can’t blame God for not placing them among ‘the elect.’”

This statement is perfectly consistent with all Calvinistic preaching. Everyone who believes Christ does so voluntarily and rejection is also a volitional choice. I refer the reader and the author to the New Hampshire Confession of Faith on this subject:

“We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.”

Interestingly enough, I obtained through a church website in Lemon Grove, California (a church I am sure the author is familiar with) the following article of faith:

### **Section 9 - Of Grace in the New Creation**

We believe that in order to be saved sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Jesus Christ; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with Divine truth so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

You will note the sentence “the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with Divine truth so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel.” The issue of the will and why man voluntarily receives the gospel is clearly delineated in this statement. “Wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with Divine truth” is exactly what the Calvinist believes. The Holy Spirit secures “above our comprehension” voluntary obedience, this being perfectly consistent with John 3:8:

**John 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.**

You will notice further the last sentence of both Statements of Faith:

“...and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life...”

I don't know how much clearer this Calvinistic statement can be made. The evidence of the new birth or regeneration is in the *fruits* of repentance and faith. Fruits are not causes but results of. This means the Holy Spirit above our comprehension regenerates and then we repent and profess faith. No matter how you divide this, the action of the Holy Spirit is first and primary and obedience is secured not by man's natural disposition of the will. The will has been brought into conformity with the will of God (For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Philippians 2:13); then man repents and believes. Calvinists understand this to be the logical order, but most understand there is no separation of time. Regeneration, repentance, and faith are simultaneous, so that regeneration *always* results in repentance and faith.

As both Statements of Faith declare, God's action secures obedience. Therefore the grace of God in regeneration cannot be frustrated. Hence, you have the scriptural view of irresistible grace. To say God's grace can be frustrated is to deny both Statements of Faith and makes man's will superior to God's.

It is beyond remarkable that the author of “Calvinist Pesticides” was a member of a church that has a Calvinistic Statement of Faith. Merely a cursory glance at the entire Statement reveals it is

built upon the 1833 New Hampshire Confession of Faith. This Confession was written by Calvinistic Baptists for Calvinistic Baptists. I have read the statistic (though I can neither confirm nor deny) that nearly 80% of independent fundamental Baptist churches use this confession or have statements modeled upon it. The New Hampshire Confession contains all five points of what the author describes as “Calvin’s wilted T.U.L.I.P.” What I confess I do not know is whether or not the author of “Calvinist Pesticides” has repudiated the Statement of his former church. Whether they realize it or not, they have accepted one of the most widely used Baptist Calvinistic confessions that reflect historic Baptist doctrine.

Back to the section of the author’s article we are now dealing with, he states, “Those who disobey the Gospel are lost – and it’s their own fault. They can’t blame God for not placing them among ‘the elect.’”

This too, is a Calvinistic position. Paul makes this very clear in Romans. Man is responsible for his own sin and the fact that God is a god of plan and purpose does not abrogate man’s responsibility. The fact that a particular man is elect or non-elect has no bearing upon his sinful condition. After finishing the section on the “chosen before the foundation of the world” in Ephesians, Paul says before the “quickening,” those who were “dead in trespasses and sins” were “children of wrath, even as others.”(Eph. 2:3). Among these are, of course, the elect of chapter 1. Jews and Gentiles, elect and non-elect are all “children of wrath.” “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23). Thus, man’s natural depravity is not affected by election.

The non-elect cannot blame God because their sin is their own. What the author might spend time attempting to prove to further his position is this: Would there be more people saved without an election than there are with it? His objection to the doctrine indicates he believes there would be or else he could have no objection that God has sovereignly chosen some. The election of God is not salvation; it is unto salvation. Don’t let the author presume the Calvinistic position on election prevents the salvation of any person. It is positive in that it guarantees some will be saved. Without it, all would die as reprobates.

This ties in beautifully with all the rest of the doctrine and especially in the previous mentioned articles of faith. The Holy Spirit secures the voluntary obedience of the elect so that election stands. Without the Holy Spirit’s work, those chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world would perish “even as others.”

I will leave the author to explain the last part of 1 Peter 2:8, “...even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”

The author follows with the next scripture:

1 Peter 2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

His comment:

“So much for the idea that ‘the elect’ (as portrayed by Calvinists) were set apart for salvation in eternity past. Every saved person was once a lost person who, in his rebellion against Christ, had no more hope of mercy than any other lost person. But after receiving Christ as Saviour, any lost person becomes part of “the people of God”, and enjoys the full measure of God’s mercy.”

This passage in Peter fits perfectly with Paul’s teaching in Romans 9. Paul said:

Romans 9:25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

Notice what he says in verse 30:

Romans 9:30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

What Peter has in view here are all men among Jews and Gentiles who have been brought into the covenant of grace. The Jews rejected the Gentiles, not believing they could possibly be included in the covenant. The Jews also rejected Christ. Among those who did not appear to be God’s children is a remnant who by their regeneration have been proven to be God’s people.

Romans 9:27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

That Gentiles were also included in the covenant is brought out by Paul in Ephesians 2:11-13

Ephesians 2:11-13 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; [12] That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: [13] But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

And Paul states further:

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The Calvinist agrees that the elect were once lost. The “Pesticides” author says, “...after receiving Christ as Saviour, any lost person becomes part of ‘the people of God’, and enjoys the full measure of God’s mercy.” The “any lost” person is correct as Peter would put it because some among the Gentiles as well as the Jews are a part of the covenant.

When the author says, “Every saved person was once a lost person who, in his rebellion against Christ, had no more hope of mercy than any other lost person,” he is in conflict with Paul. Perhaps he can explain why the “remnant” of Romans 9:27 has no more hope of mercy than the rest of Israel that perishes. The “remnant” do not know they are the “remnant” until they are saved as the “elect” do not know they are “elect” until they are saved. The whole point of

declaring a “remnant” is to let us know some will definitely be saved. God has always known who these are because He planned and purposed it.

Romans 8:29-30 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. [30] Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

They are as the “reserved...who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal” (Romans 11:4).

The author of “Pesticides” should consider scripture with scripture and not isolate to prove a point.

Next the author points to 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:6.

1 Peter 4:6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

He comments:

“In other words, this is why we go soulwinning, go street preaching, and pass out tracts. We preach to those who are spiritually dead so they can have the chance to ‘live according to God in the spirit’, though “they might be judged according to men in the flesh.’ This answers the gnawing question of whether we should try to get Muslims, Jews, Catholics, and Communists saved, when we know that they will likely suffer maltreatment at the hands of their families and peers – especially after they are Scripturally baptized.”

Amen to the preaching of the gospel – this is a blessed tenet of Calvinistic interpretation! Just as God has ordained men to eternal life, He has ordained the means by which they are saved. No man will be saved without the preaching of the gospel. Every Calvinist knows there will be favorable results of the preached gospel because God’s elect are in the world. The gospel *will* be heard and believed by some. However the “Pesticides” author has no such assurance. He states his position well: “We preach to those who are spiritually dead so they can have the chance to ‘live according to God in the spirit’ ...”

The Calvinist does not rest on “chances.” “Chances” avail nothing without the operation of the Holy Spirit. The author says the lost are “spiritually dead.” This is true. When Jesus spoke to Lazarus, did he speak to give a dead man a “chance” to come out of the tomb? No chance was involved. He came out because this was God’s call. Please do not take the words of the scripture lightly. When the scripture says a man is “dead in trespasses and sin” the word “dead” is used with purpose. The word “dead” is opposed to “alive.” Those spiritually “dead” do not have spiritually “alive” actions. Perhaps those following closely can now see the relationship between the earlier part of this response concerning regeneration, repentance, and faith.” The Holy Spirit regenerates or brings to life. Those brought to life always repent and believe, again with no separation of time.

I do not preach Christ to give men chances. I preach the gospel to *save* the elect. I don't know who they are – only God knows. Thus the preaching of the gospel is to all men because:

“...thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation...” (Rev. 5:9)

The scripture says:

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Jesus *shall save his people* not “give them a chance.”

Under the “Pesticides” author’s belief, men with a “chance” are as likely not to believe as to believe because the choice is merely of their own will. Therefore, the whole world may remain lost because their salvation has been left to “chance.” Thank God that he did not leave my salvation up to chance. I would never have believed had he not initiated a regenerating work in me.

I might further add Calvinists have always believed in the necessity of the preached word. The greatest revivals in this country in times past have been out of Calvinistic preaching. Please consider Jonathan Edwards and the first Great Awakening. There have been no national revivals under Arminian preaching and the history of this country among Baptists has been overwhelmingly Calvinistic. Modern Baptist thought is a mixture of Methodist Arminianism diluting the faith of Baptists. They too, reject “Calvin’s...T.U.L.I.P.”

Next we look at the author’s comments on 1 John 5:1:

1 John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

He comments:

“Can the Holy Spirit make it much plainer than this? Ours is a ‘whosoever’ Gospel. Every human being who is of age to understand that he is a sinner in need of a Saviour can choose to believe on Jesus Christ and be born again into the family of God. It’s that simple because *God in His sovereignty* made it so!”

This is a plain verse to be sure. “Whosoever,” or “the person who believes that Jesus is the Christ” is born of God.” No Calvinist ever claimed that “whosoever” does not believe is a child of God. Although the author may try to find a verse that says “Every human being who is of age to understand that he is a sinner in need of a Saviour can choose to believe on Jesus Christ and be born again into the family of God,” this verse does not say it. It only says those who believe are the children of God. It is plain the verse does not say what the author says it says.

It is amusing the author puts the words “*God in His sovereignty*” in italics to set it off from the rest of the text. Typically, Arminians love to pay lip service to the sovereignty of God all the while denying it throughout.

The author finishes Part 1 of his article with 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:9-13. This part contains little comment except he adds words like “those who choose to believe and those who choose not to believe” to the text. He also adds the comment “eternal life is available to all, though all will not receive it.” Though little comment is made, I believe I know the direction the author is heading. Combining “whosoever” in his misinterpretation of 1 John 5:1 to this text, he is saying coming to Christ is only a matter of choice, as if all men have the ability naturally.

What do the scriptures say?

John 6:65 And he said, **Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.**

John 6:37 **All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**

John 6:44 **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.**

John 6:63-65 **It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. [64] But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. [65] And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.**

In the words of the author, “Can the Holy Spirit make it much plainer than this?” Man does not come to Christ on his own. He must be drawn by the Father. The “Pesticide” author says “Every human being...can choose to believe...” as if his choice is all that is involved. Jesus says they will not come unless they are drawn. He also says:

John 5:40 **And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.**

Who are those who come to Christ? Those who have the supernatural working of the Spirit.

Psalms 110:3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power...”

John 1:12-13 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: [13] Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Those whom God draws and in whom He works salvifically are His elect chosen before the foundation of the world. Jesus said:

John 17:2 **As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.**

John 17:9 **I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.**

The question asked earlier, “Would there be more people saved without an election than there is with it?” is important because the election is the only reason any are saved. These are the ones Jesus says to the Father “thou has given me.”

Now we come to Part 2 of “Calvinist Pesticides.”

The author begins part 2 with the same personal attacks as part 1. Moving on from those, he begins with 3<sup>rd</sup> John 8:

3 John 1:8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

The author sets forth that humans are the indispensable instrument of God to spread the gospel. To this all Calvinists give a hearty “Amen!” As stated in answers to part 1, the preaching of the Gospel is God’s appointed means to save the elect. Not one person will ever be saved without hearing and believing the Gospel. The author seems to think Calvinists will be shocked by his statement. This only proves he has not done enough studying of Calvinistic positions to frame his arguments correctly. I remind the author that such great missionaries as William Carey, Adoniram Judson, and Luther Rice who pioneered modern missionary endeavors were Calvinists.

What I **am** shocked to read is this statement by the author:

“Even if a person gets saved by simply reading the Bible, a host of humans were involved in the centuries-long process of writing, translating, preserving, protecting, printing, distributing and financing required to propagate Bibles in general, that that one Bible in particular should find its way into the hands of that one specific person.”

I am shocked and say “Hallelujah” because he has just agreed with the Calvinistic position and made it as clear as I could ever hope to! God makes sure His word gets to that ONE SPECIFIC PERSON! God’s makes sure His elect will hear the gospel and be saved! Now you know why soul winning is such a positive effort for those who understand the doctrines of grace. We know there will be results! The Arminian has no such hope because, as earlier stated by the author, his efforts only give man a “chance” to be saved!

Now he moves on and as he does he comes closer to the real sentiments of his “decisional regeneration” thinking. Man desires something to brag about and the author now makes his boast. I won’t make much comment on his assertions that God uses human instruments as “tools”

to win the lost. This I believe. However, I don't find it necessary to say "I saved" anyone because I helped by preaching the Gospel. Though it may be technically true in the way the author puts it, I wouldn't say it lest someone get the wrong impression that both Christ and I are saviours. This smacks of sacerdotal salvation. Recently I heard a Christian say, "Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ saved me." I understood what he meant but the words go down hard. I would much rather hear a person say, "When Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ was preaching, Jesus saved me."

This is the very kind of wording "decisional regenerationists" use when reporting their numbers. They are quick to dwell on the numbers because it builds them up in their own eyes and in the eyes of their peers. "By the way, how many did you save today?" Enough said.

Now the author makes this statement:

"It cannot be denied, either, that the sinner who trusts Christ has a part in his own salvation. As Jesus said in Revelation 3:5, 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.' Jesus does all the saving (the sinner can but receive or reject the gift of eternal life), but the salvation would be impossible without the sinner's willingness to believe the Gospel and receive the Saviour."

Yes, my friend, it can be denied. The author implies here that "He that overcometh" is the same who has a part in his own salvation. I would maintain those who overcome do so by the persevering grace of God. These are those "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:5). The power of God is the reason they overcome so that no man can "boast" in any part of his salvation. Likewise, his willingness to believe comes not from within himself but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Arminian thinking of the author of "Calvinist Pesticides" leads him to no other conclusions than he just stated, "It cannot be denied, either, that the sinner who trusts Christ has a part in his own salvation." Perhaps he should consider this. "Christ saved me with my help" is the same as saying "I saved myself with Christ's help." Let him decide which sword he wants to fall on.

Now we move to Part 3. Part 3 also begins with the aforementioned character attacks. This part exemplifies in the greatest way how uninformed the author is on the subject at hand. He states when explaining the "P" in "T.U.L.I.P":

"Preservation of the saints (not to be confused with the eternal security of the born again believer in Jesus Christ), whereby the elect are preserved from committing gross sin."

The author goes on in several paragraphs to refute this Calvinistic (?) belief. I have studied the doctrines of grace for over 30 years and this is the first I have ever heard of this. I can only assume the author has read from another writer who also was ignorant of the meaning of the "P"

in “T.U.L.I.P.” I do wish the author of “Pesticides” would have taken more time to study his opponents before charging forward with ridiculous assertions.

However, the author has found an argument he can win. He has built a nice straw man and attacked it very successfully. For this, I suppose, he is to be commended.

Now let me very clearly give the reader and our uniformed “Pesticides” author the meaning of the “P.” If you want to know what a Calvinist believes, ask a Calvinist. Taken first from the New Hampshire Confession Faith of 1833:

### **Of the Perseverance of Saints**

**We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.**

Taken from the church in Lemon Grove, California, whom the “Pesticides” author is familiar with, the Calvinist idea of “P” is stated this way:

### **Section 15 - Of the Perseverance of the Saints**

**We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation.**

Stated by the Philadelphia Confession of Faith of 1742 (the first widely used confession by Baptists in America):

### **Of The Perseverance of the Saints**

**1. Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence he still begets and nourisheth in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon; notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet he is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraven upon the palm of his hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity.**

**2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with him, the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.**

**3. And though they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves, yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.”**

The reader and the author of “Calvinist Pesticides” should note the third part of this article expressly denies the “Pesticides” author’s claims:

“And though they may....fall into grievous sins... yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.”

This concludes the parts of the article I have seen. While I am not necessarily enamored with the description “Calvinist,” I do believe all of the doctrines of grace. I understand, as did Spurgeon, what the term Calvinism means and do believe these doctrines contain nothing but the gospel. The “Pesticides” author’s views are of a powerless God without plan or purpose and who is largely thwarted in His “attempts” to save. I believe in Jehovah God and His Son, Jesus Christ, “Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” (Ephesians 1:11).