

FREE-WILL.

Plymouth, April 10th, 1876.

Brother Gold:—

After giving my impressions in a letter recently mailed to you, I have concluded to write to you again, and hope that it will be comforting to the children of God.

Free-will is a term used by christians, expressed generally to mean that the will of man is as free to do good as it is to do evil; or, in plain-er words, it is in man's own power, and just as easy for him to will good as it is for him to will bad, or to will to go to heaven or to hell; or to will holiness or sin; or, in other words, that man possesses in himself a determining volition or power over his own will, to turn it in which way he pleases, just as free to good as to evil, under no control but man himself; that a man can be a christian, or let it alone.

I don't believe a word of such doctrine, and my reasons I will assign: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." David, personating *God* speaketh to his *Son*; by which text you can plainly see that men have no will to love, nor serve, nor be saved by *Jesus Christ*, until *Christ*, in the day of his power, by the *Spirit*, makes them willing to be saved by him. This my heart knows to be an experimental as well as Bible truth, and no man has a will to be saved by *Christ* by nature. If he has, why and wherefore is their will in this text attributed to the day of *Christ's* power, so that the will of man is under control and he wills not to be saved by *Christ* until *Christ* by his power gives it to him. Then it is a will by power, not a free will, but given and only free after given.—Phl. 2: 13. For it is *God* that worketh in you both to wilt and to do of his own good pleasure. Now you can see from this text that *God* works the will in a sinner, to do his good pleasure and that pleasure is to believe in *Jesus Christ*; for this is the will of the *Father*, that every one that seeth the *Son* and believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. Then, a sinner has no will to do good, no will to come to *Christ* to be saved by him, no will to go to heaven in *God's* way until *God* by his *Spirit* works this will in his heart. Had he not worked this will there would have been no doing good in a right way, from right principles. Therefore it is said in *John*, 6th chapter and 44th verse, "No man can come unto me except the *Father* which sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day." "It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of the *Lord*." "Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the *Father*, cometh to me." You can see in these verses, spoken by *Jesus*, that a sinner has no will to come to him, by whom is the only way to be saved, and therefore needs the drawing of the *Father*, or the operation of his *Spirit* to influence his will to come to *Christ*, or to teach him to hear and learn of *God* how to come to *Christ*. So that the cause of any sinner's coming to *Christ* is of *God's* operation on his will, and without which operation of *God's* *Spirit* to draw, to

teach, and to lead the sinner, none ever did, none can, nor any ever will come to *Christ*, nor have a will to be saved by *Christ* only.—See *John* 6: 67. But there are some of you that believe not; for *Jesus* knew from the beginning, that is, as soon as *Judas* joined his little band, who they were that believed not, al-luding to *Judas* and others who should betray him, and said, "Therefore I said unto you, that no man can come unto me except it were given him of my *Father*." The popular theory of the day ignores this sentiment inculcated by *Christ*, yet such claim to be his disciples. Now what say you, can or cannot man of his own free will, come to *Christ*? If he can, then it ceases to be the gift of the *Father*. If he cannot, then the gift of *God's* *Spirit* to produce motive in the soul, to influence the will of the sinner, must be necessary, and that without this gift the sinner has neither motive nor will to come to *Christ*, and as *Christ* says he cannot come without this gift of the *Father*, will you dare then to say that a sinner has a free will and can be a christian if he chooses, or let it alone if he chooses. The truth is he chooses to let it alone and not come to *Christ*, unless *God* gives him the power so to do. Then *God* gives the will and the doing. So that man has no free will to do good, but is bound in chains of lust, and is in bondage to the beggarly elements of the world until the time this will is given of *God* to the sinner. Now recollect that this was said on the account of *Judas*, who seemed to have had a will, yea, to have come to *Christ*; for he was one of the twelve and had joined and come into company with the disciples to whom it had been given to come to *Christ*.—He was purser, preacher, and purchaser of all the necessaries of the little flock. Yet with all this he had not believed nor come to *Christ*; and why? Because it had not been given him of the *Father* so to do. Then you must shut your eyes or see that *God* gives this gift of will, this gift of his *Spirit* and faith to some and not to others. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."—*Jno.* 5: 4. Here you see the will of all men by nature. Then to have a will to come to *Christ* and be saved by him is the gift of *God*, and no man has it nor can have it.

Take the 19 chapter and 14th verse, "We will not have this man to reign over us." This is the nature of the human heart with all the mighty boasted free will. Yea, free indeed, but to sin and not come to *Christ*, nor have him as ruler over them. Nor has the sinner power over this will—this wicked will—free to sin and not to good.

The parable of our *Lord*, comparing the gospel and its dispensation, to a marriage feast will, I think, place the matter in a fair light, but not on the ground free-willers and free-agent men wish to take it. This ground we will take; but let it be understood, in the first place, that the marriage feast is made by *God* the *Father* for his *Son* *Jesus Christ* and his church. You can have it for sinners, or for all mankind, or for as

many as feel willing to come, it will make no difference; for when the command, "come, all things are now ready," was given, they began to make excuses, one saying, Pray have me excused, &c. Now, sir, did these men have a free will to come? You know better, but say you, they might have come. How so, when one's farm, and another's oxen, and another's wife, influenced them another way? Could they give themselves the will, contrary to their will, a thing not in the power of man, but in *God* alone.—

The second invitation found the halt, the lame, and the blind. They were not indifferent when they heard the message. Why so? Because they were characters of necessity, which shows us that no sinner will come to *Christ* until brought by grace to a state of necessity, like the prodigal son, forced to his father's house because death was everywhere else.

Lastly, Go out and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. Now sir, answer me, why did he not compel the first? he could but would not: if you say he could not subdue them, you limit his power, which would involve him in darkness and uncertainty, like ourselves.

Here then, you must see that grace is discriminating. Some are constrained to repent and believe in *Christ* and fill places in his Church, while others are suffered to pursue their own carnal wills and love of riches until death, and then fall into hell. And although all are, or may be, invited—yet some it is given to believe in the name of *Christ*, given to come to *Christ*, are drawn, quickened, enlightened, taught, lead, made willing in the day of *God's* power. In a word, *God* takes them by the hand when dead in sin, without will or desire, life or light, and of his own will, mercy and grace, and works in them to will and do of his own good pleasure.

Now sir, if you have got a religion that you were not constrained to have, I would not give you a brass pin for it. If you have got a religion of free will, that you can have or let alone, it is worth nothing. If you have got a religion that you were not forced to seek, but under the necessity of having one that you could not get rid of, but was laid on you of necessity—it is not a true religion.

Such a religion that comes of the will of men, is nothing but the religion of hypocrites, witches and devils in human form. Such was the religion of *Judas*, *Simon Magus*, *Balaam* and many others.—*Jude* 1: 13.

But, true gospel religion is not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of *God*: I ask you, what will had you in your first birth? None. So in your second birth, if you ever experienced it, you will attribute the praise to *God*. So that, the doctrine of Free-will, or, that a man can be religious or let it alone, is a false doctrine. Hear, I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds I will write them; I will be to them a *God*, and they shall be my people. I will bring the blind by a way they know not, and as many as are lead by the *Spirit* of *God*.

are the sons of *God*. If any man have not the *Spirit* of *Christ*, he is not of him. His salvation is by grace or the gift of *God*; and, that doctrine that contradicts this in whole or in part, is false; for, a sinner is dead and cannot give himself life, he is bound and cannot enlighten himself, he is deaf and cannot give himself hearing, he is lost and cannot find himself, he is not willing to come to *Christ* and cannot give himself that will, he is the captive of the devil, therefore not free, he is helpless and cannot help himself, polluted and cannot wash himself, he is poor, and naked, and ignorant of *God's* salvation, a miserable, wretched child of wrath, and the works of the devil he will do unless *God* takes him in hand and by his *Spirit* and influence makes him a new creature. So you see you must be born again, or be damned.

To say a man may or may not be religious, or that he is left to his own free will, as it is called, just to do as he may in this matter, is to give scripture the lie. For the scriptures revealed, in all the promises that are made, show to the contrary. And the scriptures will recognize this as the grounds of all true religion.—Religion is sought and received from necessity. Religion is compelled on persons, that is, they are led to have it, for it is a gift. This necessity and compulsion make men willing in the day of *Christ's* power. Without which, a sinner never has a free-will to good; although a man may will to pray, to profess, to preach and do all the duties of religion, and yet have no religion at all, for want of a right motive to influence the will—which motive the *Spirit* alone can give by renewing the mind. And it was the want of this motive that made the religion of the Pharisees nothing worth but to receive the greater damnation, because there was no spirit in all their works. They were only the works of the flesh, and the will of the flesh, and not fruits of *God's* *Spirit*. And here is the grand mistake that men make, in putting the will and works of the flesh for those of the *Spirit*.—The tree must be good before the fruit can be good; and the man that says that a man, before he lives by grace is capable of faith, and that holy desire, does not know the first letter in the christian alphabet—if the tree must be made good, how can a sinner, of himself, have holy desires or a free will to good, or faith either, since faith is the gift of *God*? For such a doctrine is wholly suspending the salvation of sinners in a self-determining power of the free will of the sinner, and frequently those fashionable religious gentry exclaim with a sanctimonious tune, It is all of grace: if salvation is conditional all sinners may refuse and neglect so great a salvation and be lost. And so *Christ* has died in vain.

Hear *God's* religion: I will give life to the dead, eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, to seek, find and save the lost, to lead and guide, comfort and keep by his power to salvation, put his fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from him, plant and rejoice over, and bring safe to