

Outside the Camp

So let us go forth to Him outside the camp bearing His reproach. (Heb. 13:13 LITV)

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From the editor ...

In this issue you will find three literary illustrations with extended metaphors. These are known as analogies or parables. As in all cases with such a method of illustration, the metaphor will break down at some point, since there is not an exact correspondence between the source (vehicle) and the target (tenor). But I hope you will get the picture.

As we start our twelfth year of publication, I would like to report some statistics from our web site. In 2007, our site had visits from people in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Turks and Caicos Islands, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, United States, and Zimbabwe. We had 50,705 hits from 9,723 visits in January; 46,413 hits from 7,804 visits in February; 45,302 hits from 10,131 visits in March; 39,669 hits from 10,412 visits in April; 38,407 hits from 10,469 visits in May; 47,147 hits from 14,711 visits in June; 46,453 hits from 14,825 visits in July; 43,478 hits from 12,101 visits in August; 36,336 hits from 9,611 visits in September; 41,494 hits from 9,965 visits in October; 42,773 hits from 8,936 visits in November; and 60,851 hits from 9,991 visits in December. This averages out to be 1,477 hits per day and 353 visits per day. Praise God! □

FIRE AND LOVE

In the neighborhood of Christendom, three houses stand next to each other in the following order: the house of Arminian, the house of Calvinist, and the house of Christian. The houses of Arminian and Calvinist are on fire; the owners are in them and apparently oblivious to the horrific blazes around them. Christian, who sees that his neighbors' houses are on fire, is on the street, and Arminian and Calvinist are in their houses.

Christian: Arminian, your house is on fire! You need to get out!

Arminian: That's really unloving of you to say that. My house is perfectly fine.

Christian: Your house is being destroyed! You are headed for destruction! Please, leave before it's too late!

Arminian: I've heard about people like you. You think everyone's house is on fire but your own. You're a wacko cultist. Even our neighbor Calvinist thinks so. Calvinist knows a lot about houses and fireproofing. If my house is on fire, why hasn't Calvinist said so? He's my next-door neighbor, after all.

Calvinist: What's all the ruckus?

Arminian: It's Christian again. He's telling me that my house is on fire and I need to get out or else I'll be destroyed (*chuckle*).

Calvinist: (*Chuckle*) Yeah, I told you he was going to do it again. He can't help it. He must have some mental disorder that keeps him from loving his neighbors.

Christian: Your house is on fire, too, Calvinist! Can't you see? Are you so blind? You and Arminian are laughing it up while you go to destruction! You need to get out! Now!

Calvinist: There you go again, with those unloving words like "blind" and "destruction." You really are a sad case, Christian. You should try love for a change.

Christian: Your house is on fire and you don't even know it!

Calvinist: Sure, Christian, whatever you say (*chuckle*). We have all these neighbors around here, and none of them are saying what you are saying. We have Wesleyan and Pelagian and Roman Catholic and even Hyper-Calvinist on this block. If what you are saying were true, wouldn't they also tell us? You're saying that my house is on fire and the house of my friend Arminian is on fire and we don't even know it, yet know one knows it except for you. You think you have the only right knowledge. You think God has given you perfect knowledge. You think you're better than everyone else and that your house is better than everyone else's. You've deluded yourself into thinking that everyone's house is on fire except your own. No

(See Page 2: Fire)

Fire

(Continued From Page 1)

one else agrees with you – shouldn't that tell you something? Now take Arminian's house for example. His house is not as well-built as my house and certainly would have more of a tendency to be susceptible to fire, but just because it's more susceptible to fire doesn't mean that it actually is on fire. Your logic uses the following *non sequitur*: Since Arminian's house is more susceptible to fire, this means that it actually is on fire. Quite an irrational kind of logic, wouldn't you say (*chuckle*)?

Arminian: (*Chuckle*) Calvinist, I love the way you use those big logical words like *non sequitur*! It sure puts wacko Christian in his place! He doesn't have any logic! You're too smart for him!

Christian: Neighbors, I'm not using the fallacious reasoning of which Calvinist is accusing me! There is no mere "susceptibility" or "tendency" here! I can actually see the fire! I can see your house being burned up! And if you stay inside, you will be burned up with it!

Arminian: Man, you are so judgmental. Calvinist is right. Try some love for a change! Calvinist loves me, and he shows his love for me by giving me tips on how to fire-proof my house and by telling me that my house is a safe refuge from fire. This makes me feel really good about myself and makes me want to fire-proof my house even more. That is the love I get from Calvinist.

Calvinist: Did you hear that, Christian? Do you see how you can get much more of an audience when you're not so harsh and unloving and judgmental? Do you see how Arminian is now much more receptive to being given advice on how to fire-proof his house? If I took your approach, he wouldn't want to fire-

proof his house at all! I've now established a productive, meaningful relationship with Arminian, so he respects me and my views. A little love goes a long way!

Christian: Calvinist, you have no clue as to what is safe from fire and what is not! Look at your own house burning up! You don't even know what fire is, let alone know enough about fire safety to be able to help Arminian! In fact, the advice that you have given to Arminian is actually making his house burn more quickly! What kind of love is that? Your love is actually hatred! I am loving both you and Arminian by telling you again that your houses are on fire and you must leave immediately!

Calvinist: That's a good one – I made Arminian's house burn more quickly by giving him loving advice (*chuckle*). I guess that makes him two-fold more a child of the fire than he already was, right (*chuckle*)? Man, you are just so out of touch with reality. So, not only is Arminian's house on fire, but my house is on fire, too, because of what I've said to Arminian. Yeah, right. You're sounding so much like a cultist right now. You're right and everyone else is wrong. Yours is the only house in the whole world that is not on fire, yet no one can see the fire except for you. You've been given some kind of "special revelation" to see fire that no one else can see. I'm talking la-la land here. I'm talking Jim Jones Kool-Aid time here. I'm talking time for the guys in the white coats to take you up to that special room made out of rubber.

Arminian: (*Chuckle*) That's a good one, Calvinist! You are so funny!

Christian: No, I'm not the only one in the world whose house is not on fire. There are others even in this neighborhood whose house is not on fire and who can see others' houses on fire. They, too, are out warning the people whose houses are on fire.

Arminian: Yeah, you and just a few others scattered throughout this neighborhood and throughout the world? They must've had the same Kool-Aid that you did!

Calvinist: That's a great one, Arminian! You're learning my one-liners! Keep it up, and you'll be able to debate anybody! Yes, Christian thinks there are a few others like him, but as soon as he gets to know them well enough, he suddenly "finds out" that their house is on fire, too, and they suffer the wrathful words of the deluded self-righteous wacko just like we've suffered. If what Christian is saying is the truth, why is it that such a small number of people see it? Remember when I went to Presbyterian for advice about this? Presbyterian said that Christian has no right to make such a judgment on his own. He said that the matter needs to be brought before the Presbytery and maybe even before the General Assembly so the clergy – the ones who know best – can make an official church judgment. They would then put together a Committee To Study Fire and Its Effects On Houses and delve into the deeper things of truth that we laymen know nothing about. They will study exactly what fire is and make a determination as to whether or not these houses are actually on fire. Then everyone needs to abide by their judgment, because they know what's best. Renegade judgment like Christian is doing is way out of line. Also, if what Christian is saying is the truth, why isn't the fire department coming to put the fires out?

Christian: The reality that your house is on fire has nothing to do with how many people know it! Your house is burning right on top of you, and it matters not if five or five hundred people know it – it doesn't change the fact that your house is on fire and you need to leave! The Presbytery and General Assembly have already considered such a matter, and the committee came to the conclusion that what is in Arminian's house is "fire-like but

not exactly fire, and further work on the house will probably prove effective in keeping it from actually becoming fire, although more study needs to be done, and we have appointed a sub-committee to delve into the even deeper matters that laymen wouldn't dare to touch before we can come up with a definitive answer. Give us three years to come up with a comprehensive report." How helpful is that? And the reason the fire department isn't here is that the fire department has no eyes, no ears, no sense of taste, no sense of smell, and no sense of touch! In fact, if you go look at the people in the fire department, they are just carved images that were put there to make people feel like they were safe!

Arminian: I don't believe that for a second. I know from experience that those supposed "carved images" saved my life once. I had a fire in my kitchen some time back, and when I called the fire department, I heard a message stating this: "This is the fire department. We are here to save you from fire. If you have called because you have a fire, go to the room furthest away from the fire and put a blindfold on. We will then come to put out the fire. Wait for one hour before you come out of that room and take the blindfold off. Then when you return to the place where you had the fire, the fire will be gone, and you will have peace and safety." I did just as they said, and it was like a miracle! The fire in my kitchen was gone! And now I can sleep sound tonight because I know there is no fire in my house. The fire department is way more loving than Christian. They really put me at ease, especially with the "peace and safety" line at the end of the message. That's what you say to me sometimes, too, right, Calvinist?

Calvinist: Oh, yes, all the time. Contrary to what Christian says, your house is not on fire, and you have built for yourself a refuge of peace and safety with my help.

You can go to bed tonight knowing that you dwell in a house of peace and safety, just like I do. Good night, Arminian.

Arminian: Good night, Calvinist. I was getting worried there a little by what Christian said, but you put my mind at ease again.

Christian: Don't let Calvinist put your mind at ease, Arminian! You need to not be at ease! There is no peace and safety in your house! Calvinist is lying to you! Do not go to sleep, Arminian! Your house is on fire! The fire is getting closer to you! Get out!

Calvinist: Don't let Christian disturb your sleep, Arminian. Peace to you.

Christian: Calvinist, there is no peace to you or to Arminian! Your house is just as much on fire as Arminian's house is! It is burning as we speak! You need to get out now!

Calvinist: Please, Christian, give it up. We're not going to follow your delusions. I had a house like Arminian once, and, even though it wasn't nearly as sound and as fancy as the house I have now (and not a perfectly sound house like you claim yours is), it provided the basics, especially peace and safety. That's how I know I can say "peace and safety" to Arminian, because my house was very much like his. Stop telling Arminian that he is in danger. This only serves to put you more on the fringe. And none of us like to be on the fringe, right?

Christian: I don't care if people think I'm on the fringe or not! But I do care for your safety, and that's why I'm telling you to get out! I used to be in a house like yours, and it was burning around me, and I didn't know it! But I had someone who loved me enough to tell me that my house was on fire and I needed to leave, and God opened my eyes! I got out of there quickly! I'm thankful to God for bringing that person into my life and telling me what I needed to hear! Now that is love!

Calvinist: Yeah, yeah. Now why don't you be loving to me and let me get some shut-eye? See, there's Arminian over there sleeping like a baby. Ah, how peaceful.

Christian: Arminian! Arminian! Wake up! Don't sleep! Wake up, Arminian! Your house is on fire! You need to get out now!

Calvinist: How incredibly mean and insensitive of you. Is that the kind of love you're talking about? You would "love" someone so much that you disturb his sleep, make him unable to get a good night's rest, and make it so he's fatigued the next day? What kind of cruel person are you, anyway?

Christian: He must not sleep! He must be disturbed!

Calvinist: It is your kind of "love" that makes people upset rather than at peace. It makes them so they can't get any comfort at all. I detest your kind of love.

Christian: They should not be comfortable in a house that is burning to the ground! They need to get out! You need to get out!

Calvinist: We've been through this before. I don't want to hear it. Hey, I'm feeling a little warm; I need to turn the thermostat down. Okay - wait, the thermostat is already all the way down. It's getting quite warm in here. Hey ... hey ... ouch ... ☐

For when they say,

Peace and Safety!

Then suddenly
destruction comes upon
them, like the travail to the
[one having babe] in womb,
and not at all
shall they escape.

(1 Thessalonians 5:3)

TO RID THE DISEASE

The setting is a hospital. Dr. Christian has found out that Mr. Patient has a deadly disease. However, the disease is one in which there is a cure. Dr. Christian is standing beside the bed of Mr. Patient.

Dr. Christian: Mr. Patient, I have some bad news and some good news. The bad news is that you have a disease that, if gone untreated, will kill you in a week. But there's really good news! The good news is th...

Mr. Patient (interrupting): I know what you're telling me, doctor, and I don't accept it. I do not have a deadly disease. In fact, I resent your judgment of my body. You have no right to make such a judgment. I know my body is fine, because I feel fine. You are being very unloving by telling me that I have a deadly disease.

Dr. Christian: But Mr. Patient, you do have this disease! And if you don't do something about it, you will die in a week! It is a dreadful disease. It is deadly. I have good news, though, and it's not that I saved a load of money on my car insurance. It's really good news for you! There is a c...

Mr. Patient (interrupting): What kind of hateful person are you anyway? You say words like "dreadful" and "deadly" like you enjoy using them to describe me. Is that how you get your jollies? Do you think you're better than I am?

Dr. Christian: No, no, that's not it at all! Your disease has a cure! A complete cure! That's what I've been trying to tell you! There is medicine that will totally cure you!

Mr. Patient: I know what you're insinuating here, so don't beat around the bush. You're insinuating that if I don't take this medicine, I'm going to die, right? Is that what you're saying?

Dr. Christian: Yes, if you don't take the medicine, you will die within a week, no doubt about it. But the medicine is right here, so

let me go g...

Mr. Patient (interrupting): Don't go anywhere, doctor. You are so arrogant. You claim to know that I have this disease, and you claim to know that there is a cure. Do you think you have perfect knowledge? Do you think you're the only one with this knowledge? If not, why hasn't my regular doctor told me this? I want my regular doctor for a second opinion.

Dr. Christian: But your regular doctor doesn't know ...

Mr. Patient (interrupting): There you go again. Nobody knows but you, right? You sound like a gnostic cult leader. Is that what you are, Dr. Christian? A gnostic cult leader?

Dr. Christian: I was just trying to ...

Mr. Patient (interrupting): What, trying to show how much more knowledgeable you are than everybody else? Go get me my regular doctor.

Dr. Christian: I won't do that, Mr. Patient. Your regular doctor doesn't ...

Mr. Patient (interrupting): Nurse! Nurse! I want my regular doctor in here right now!

Mr. Nurse: I hear you, Mr. Patient. It's okay. We'll get your regular doctor in here right away. I'll stay here with you so Dr. Christian doesn't say any more mean things to you. I do know how mean Dr. Christian can be. *(Calls Dr. Light)*

Dr. Light (entering room): Well, hello there, Mr. Patient! Good to see you again! What seems to be the problem?

Mr. Patient: Dr. Christian here is telling me that I have a deadly disease and that if I don't take his "cure," I'm going to die in ten days!

Dr. Light: Is that what you told him, Dr. Christian?

Dr. Christian: I certainly did, Dr.

Light. That's what doctors are supposed to do. I told him his disease and told him the remedy.

Dr. Light: Is that really necessary, Dr. Christian? "I told him the disease and told him the remedy." Please. It's like you have some kind of "special revelation" from God that no one else has, like some kind of gnostic cult leader. I don't see any disease in this man.

Dr. Christian: You don't even know what to look for, Dr. Light. How can you tell that he doesn't have this disease if you don't even know how to detect it?

Dr. Light: Ah, so condescending, Dr. Christian. Try not to sound so arrogant. Some of us just see things differently than you do.

Dr. Christian: But all the test results are so clear! It's not just my opinion, Dr. Light! There has never been a clearer case! There is no doubt that this man has this disease! It says so right in the Diagnostic Manual!

Mr. Patient: See how unloving Dr. Christian is, Dr. Light? That's why I never wanted to go to him. He has the reputation of telling other people this, too. The reason I went to you is because I know you would tell me that everything is okay.

Dr. Light: Yes, everything is okay, my friend. You do not have this so-called "dreadful disease" that Dr. Christian is saying you have. He thinks he has the only correct interpretation of the Diagnostic Manual. Everything is just fine. You look absolutely fine. And you feel fine, too, right?

Mr. Patient: I've never felt better!

Dr. Light: And my motto is: "You are how you feel." Since you've never felt better, then you have never been better! There's nothing wrong with you! Go home and enjoy life.

Mr. Patient: Thank you, Dr. Light! And Dr. Christian, I never want to hear from you again. You have worried me for nothing.

Dr. Christian: But Mr. Patient, please, you need to understand ...

Mr. Patient (interrupting): No more. I don't want to hear it. Nurse, get him out of here.

Mr. Nurse: You need to leave, Dr. Christian.

Dr. Christian: I am leaving under protest.

Dr. Light: (Chuckle) Yes, that's what he always does. I'll write the discharge approval papers.

(The next day, Dr. Christian is talking to Dr. Strangelove.)

Dr. Strangelove: I heard you got into another confrontation yesterday.

Dr. Christian: Yes, but it was over a life-and-death issue. Mr. Patient has a deadly disease, and there is a cure, but he doesn't want to hear that he has the disease. And Dr. Light, who doesn't even know how to detect the disease, doesn't even believe Mr. Patient has the disease. It's incredible.

Dr. Strangelove: You just seek out confrontations, don't you? You just thrive on them, don't you?

Dr. Christian: What are you talking about? I didn't seek this out! I was telling a patient that he had a disease and that there is a cure!

Dr. Strangelove: There, you see? You had a confrontation right there. You told the patient he had a disease.

Dr. Christian: That's a confrontation? Well, if you want to say that I confronted him with the fact that he had a disease, I guess you could call it a confrontation, although I didn't do it out of any kind of unkindness. I did it so he would see his condition and seek the remedy.

Dr. Strangelove: There's where you went wrong. You are never to tell people about their condition.

Dr. Christian: What?

Dr. Strangelove: It just leads to negativity. It makes them feel bad. It makes them feel judged. It really is an unloving thing to do.

Dr. Christian: Now you're sounding like Dr. Light!

Dr. Strangelove: No, I disagree very

strongly with Dr. Light. I do believe that Mr. Patient has the deadly disease. But I will not tell Mr. Patient that. That would be a mean and unloving thing for me to do.

Dr. Christian: I can't believe what I'm hearing! It is mean and unloving to tell Mr. Patient the truth about his condition?

Dr. Strangelove: You always couch things in such black-and-white terms such as "truth." Yes, it is true that he has this condition. But what is the thing that makes him feel the best? What is the thing that will make him like you?

Dr. Christian: So that's how you make your life-and-death decisions? Whether or not the patient likes you? Whether or not the patient is happy, even if he has a deadly disease?

Dr. Strangelove: Of course. It is his own happiness that I'm concerned about. If he is happy, then I know I have done the loving thing. If he is angry, then I have done the hateful thing.

Dr. Christian: It's loving not to tell him he has a disease so he will die in a week? That sounds like hatred to me!

Dr. Strangelove: Ah, Dr. Christian, that's where we differ. This man has a week to live. It would be hatred to make him unhappy during this final week of his life. The loving thing to do is to tell him that everything is fine and that he has no disease.

Dr. Christian: What kind of doctor are you, anyway? You would lie to a patient so he could be happy for a week before he dies, yet there is a cure out there so he doesn't even have to die in a week! I'm just dumbfounded!

Dr. Strangelove: Just call it a difference in approach. Do you wonder why we never get any return patients?

Dr. Christian: They're all dead!

Dr. Strangelove: But they were happy when they died.

Dr. Christian: You can't be a doctor. Doctors are here to save lives, not to give people peace without

letting them know their disease and the cure!

Dr. Strangelove: But that's so harsh and judgmental. You need to give love a try.

Dr. Christian: You have no idea what love is. I can't stand it here.

Dr. Strangelove: Well, people like you have never lasted here. You're the kind of person who we would call part of the "lunatic fringe." You people are so zealous to save lives that you don't see that you are causing much pain and anguish in the process. I really feel sorry for you.

Dr. Christian: I have to go! I have to get out of here!

(Dr. Christian runs out of the hospital, only to encounter a bunch of picketers outside the door of the hospital. They carry signs saying, "Dr. Christian is a cultist!" and "Dr. Christian is full of anger and hate!" and "Dr. Christian thinks he knows it all!")

Dr. Christian: People, I am not what you think I am! I have told people their disease and told them about the cure! I want to see people cured!

Crowd: Hey hey, ho ho, Dr. Christian has got to go!

Dr. Christian: Won't you listen? I'm not here to be mean to anyone! But people need to know about their diseases! People are dying out there because they do not believe they have deadly diseases!

Crowd: We love Dr. Strangelove! We love Dr. Light! Dr. Christian is a gnostic! He thinks he's always right!

Dr. Christian: Is there any reasoning with you people? Can you tell me anything I have done wrong? Can you give any specifics?

Crowd: Dr. Christian, Dr. Christian, all you do is insult! Dr. Christian, Dr. Christian, Go back to your cult!

(Dr. Christian walks through the crowd of protestors who spit on him and hurl insults at him and even make derogatory remarks about his family. But he remembers his mission, which is to save lives. And he resolves to keep on trying to save lives no matter what people say.)

JUST SLIDE ON OVER ...

The monologue begins as a bus driver named Angel of Light welcomes his passengers onto the Fashionable Gospel Bus. ...

“Welcome aboard the Fashionable Gospel Bus! My, don’t you all look content! My name is Angel of Light, and I will be your bus driver to Eternity. Sit back and enjoy the ride!

“And, heh-heh, speaking of enjoying the ride, you’ll notice that some of our passengers have chosen the *most enjoyable* ride by going First Class Calvinist. I’ll be telling you a little more about this luxury class as we go along our trip, and I’ll make no bones about it – I’d like to see *everyone* eventually want to go First Class Calvinist. It really is top-of-the-line travel.

“As you see, we have a very unique arrangement on the Fashionable Gospel Bus. The First Class Calvinist seats are the window seats, and the Second Class Arminian seats are the aisle seats. Remember how you always wanted to sit by the window when you were little kids? There’s just so much more to see and to experience in the First Class Calvinist window seats! And, believe it or not, it’s really not that difficult to go from Second Class Arminian to First Class Calvinist – you just *slide on over*.

“I know, I know – some of you in the Second Class Arminian seats are just a little nervous about trying out the First Class Calvinist seats. You’re saying, ‘Hey, Angel of Light, you make it sound so easy when you say we can just slide on over. We really have some strong reservations about the First Class Calvinist seats.’ That’s quite alright, my friends. There’s plenty of time for you to weigh the pros and cons. Don’t fret too much – after all, we’re *all* going to the same place. It’s just that the First Class Calvinist seats are a much classier and more consistently comfortable

way of going to the same place. But don’t worry if you’re not quite ready yet. In fact, many of our Second Class Arminian passengers have slid on over gradually – so gradually that they hardly even noticed it. Each bump in the road brings them closer and closer to First Class. Sometimes it takes years, or even a lifetime, to slide on over, but that’s okay. We’re *all* going to the same place.

“You’ll notice that in some rows, there is a middle seat between the First Class Calvinist and the Second Class Arminian seats. Perhaps if you’re not comfortable sliding all the way to First Class, you could use the middle seat as a sort of ‘transition’ seat until you ‘come into’ the First Class Calvinist seat. Most who sit in the middle seat choose to hang onto the Universal Atonement part of the Second Class Seat as they begin to see the merits of First Class. The middle seat is a little cramped, and, frankly, you won’t feel very comfortable if you stay there for a long time; you’ll feel much better and much more consistent when you make the full transition to First Class. But if you don’t ever want to get out of that middle seat, that’s okay. In fact, that middle seat used to be the First Class Calvinist seat on the old Fashionable Gospel Bus. Many of the First Class Calvinists who went before you still hung onto a piece of Universal Atonement during their trip.

“Take some time to say ‘Hello’ to your neighbor in the seat next to you! It just fills me with joy to see the Calvinist and Arminian brothers having fellowship with each other, even though they may not be at quite the same place and may be coming from a little bit of a different perspective on the Fashionable Gospel Bus. Our bus is the ultimate in harmony and unity. We realize that those in First Class and Second Class might see things a little

differently, but we speak peace to our brothers in the seat next to us, knowing that we’re all going to the same place and that we’re all very sincere and dedicated. After all, we *all* have ‘TO ETERNITY OR BUST’ stickers on our suitcases, so we’re really not that different.

I see that the Second Classers are still happy – it’s that ‘happy, felicitous inconsistency’ that you hear your First Class brothers talk about sometimes. As long as you’re happy and your inconsistency is a happy one, then everything’s okay, even if you see things a little differently.

“And, heh-heh, speaking of seeing things a little differently, I must say again that those in First Class do have the window seats, and they are able to see much more clearly than those of you in Second Class. A-ha! I can see some of you Second Class Arminians straining to see what’s outside. Why don’t you ask your Calvinist brothers to explain what they’re seeing to you? They have a much better vantage point and can tell you all of the intricacies of what you see. Of course, many of you Second-Classers might not be intelligent enough to grasp all the intricacies, but you’ll find that your Calvinist brothers are more than willing to try to help you see what they see, since they all know that even though you may be Second Classers in your heads, you’re really First Classers in your hearts. I’m sure they’d love to tell you about how much better the view is from their seats! Maybe they can even convince some of you to try out a First Class Calvinist seat! It’s really not that difficult – you just *slide on over*.

“We’re coming up on a terrific landmark on both sides of us – it’s the Doctrines of Grace. I can see all of you First Class people smiling, because you love the looks of it. Isn’t it beautiful? You in Second Class don’t know

what you're missing. Your life would be so much more enriched if you could just see it. Yes, I know – many of you Second Class Arminians say you don't really like the looks of it. But I think it's because you haven't been able to take a really good look at it. If you'd just slide on over, you'd be able to see it better. It has perfect symmetry. Oh, how beautiful! Your First Class brothers really hope that you'll appreciate its beauty some day. They call it a 'full-orbed precious gem.' But they realize that the lower classes aren't as aesthetically adept as they are and haven't read all the advanced books on the Doctrines of Grace and don't have the educational background of Reformed Heritage to be able to analyze the minutia of this incredibly intricate landmark. That's okay, because they know that, even though you see through the window glass darkly, you're heading the same place they are.

"Oh – look! Did you see that black bus zooming in the opposite direction? They almost hit us! Oh – here they come again! They must've made a U-turn and are following us! That's the Party Bus on its way to Hell. Look at all those people in their drunken revelry! How disgusting! They don't even go to church. Look – I think I see a pro-abortion lesbian feminist! And look – there's a man with long hair with an upside down cross and an inverted pentagram on his shirt, listening to Satanic heavy metal! Oh, how horrible! I think we should all take a moment to thank God that we are not like them. And then we should all get our notebook computers out (um, well, you in Second Class can get your pencil and paper out) and write letters to the editor of our local newspaper against this Sodom and Gomorrah country we're living in! What a blessing it is to join together, First Class Calvinist and Second Class Arminian, to combat these evils. We're on the Fashionable Gospel Bus, and we're fighting the good fight,

waging spiritual warfare. We're lean, mean, Christian machines. Those in Second Class have a Bible in one hand and Wesley in the other, and those in First Class have a Bible in one hand and Calvin in the other, and we're ready to fight together against the world! Look – there they go, off in another direction again. They don't know where they're going – unlike us.

"Okay, now back to the merits of First Class. As you can see, the First Class seats adjust to an unlimited number of settings, depending on your comfort level. The Universal Love and Well-Meant Offer levels seem to be the most comfortable to most of our First Class Calvinist passengers. These settings put you a little closer to the Arminian friend beside you, so you can be in closer communion. Perhaps you in Second Class will be more apt to try First Class now that you know there are settings that enable you to remain in close communion with your Second Class Arminian friends. Yes, I know you don't want to leave them behind. That is so very thoughtful of you.

"For those of you in First Class who sometimes yearn for the days of being in Second Class, there's the Salvation Conditioned on Faith setting, which basically feels the same as the Second Class seat, only with a 'God-Given Non-Meritorious Faith' massager for you to rest on to ease your conscience.

"Ahhh ... just sit back and relax. Sing a hymn by John Wesley, that perpetual Second-Classer whom the First-Classer Charles Spurgeon said was fit to be added to the number of the twelve apostles, along with First-Classer George Whitefield. See how all of us have gotten along throughout history? We all recognize that we're *all* going to the same place.

"Ahhh ... how peaceful. How soothing. How ... WHAT?? What do I see coming toward us? Oh, no. I was hoping we wouldn't meet up with them. Well, here they come – The True

Gospel Bus. I need to warn you – these are the most mean and dour and grim and miserable people you ever want to meet. They think they have exclusive truth. They even say that in order to be on their bus, we need to become totally transformed into new creatures who think totally differently! They won't even let us walk off our bus and onto theirs! They say it's not just a matter of sliding on over from our bus to theirs! Of course, who would want to be on theirs, anyway, as you'll see.

"Okay, here they come. Take a look at that bus! Is that the most ugly, unattractive bus you've ever seen? How are they going to attract people if they eschew what's fashionable?

"Look at this! They're getting right in front of us, trying to stop us! They're pleading for us to stop! How mean of them! We've been cruising along, making good time, and now these mean people are going to make us late! Well, we'll stop, but we're not going to talk to them.

"What are they saying? That we're going the wrong way? How dare they. What are they doing now? They're holding a map up toward the windows so we can see where to go. What is the title of that map? Do you see it? It says BIBLE. What an insult. It's like they think we don't know what's in our Bibles. Just because we interpret our Bible maps a little differently, they're saying we're going the wrong way. See how unloving and judgmental they are?

"They're saying that there's only one True Gospel, and that is God's promise to save His people, giving them all the blessings of salvation from regeneration to final glory, conditioned exclusively on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, totally apart from the sinner's works and efforts. Come on now. That's for the Super Duper Premium First Class seats. They're saying that if you sit in Second Class, you don't believe the True Gospel!

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Slide

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How insulting to those of you who haven't even seen the full-orbed precious gem yet! And get this – they're saying that even those sitting in First Class don't believe the True Gospel! They're saying that in order to believe the True Gospel, you need to be totally transformed into new creatures, taken off of our bus and put onto their bus! See – what did I tell you? I told you so!

"Look, they don't even have First and Second Class seats on their bus! It's all just one kind of seat! What kind of luxury is that? Is there no room for growth? No room to slide on over to a more comfortable and more consistent seat with a better view? They say that all of them have the same view, that they're all equal. Who are they kidding? Do they think they're all perfect? What kind of cult are they, anyway?

"That must be a really unbalanced bus, with everybody on the same kind of seat. I'm really glad we have different kinds of seats that balance each other out. Like our friend A.A. Hodge said, 'The difference between the best of either class [Second Class Arminians and First Class Calvinists] is one of emphasis rather than of essential principle. Each is the complement of the other. Each is necessary to restrain, correct, and supply the one-sided strain of the other. They together give origin to the blended strain from which issues the perfect music which utters the perfect truth.' Ah, that *purrrfect* music of the Fashionable Gospel Bus! The motor is purring, and we are totally balanced, thanks to the First Class Calvinists and the Second Class Arminians complementing each other and giving origin to that blended strain! Away with the one-sided, unbalanced True Gospel Bus! You'll never attract anybody!

"And what are they saying now? They're saying that all in the True Gospel Bus count all their former buses as trash! That means they count OUR bus as trash! They're saying that they count our bus just as much trash as the Party Bus and that it will be more tolerable for the Sodomites in the black bus than for us on judgment day! How dare they even mention those dirty people in the same sentence with us! How hateful and spiteful!

"And what else are they saying? That I'm not a real Angel of Light but an imposter? Uh, don't listen to them. They, uh, don't know what they're talking about. I'm here to take you to Eternity! And we're going to Eternity in style!

"Enough of this nonsense from the ugly, mean, unloving, harsh, arrogant, judgmental cult bus. Time for some fancy maneuvering around these nuisances. ... Okay, hold on, here we go ... alright! Success! We will not be stopped!

"Well, as we head off, they're pointing in the direction they're going and in the opposite direction that we're going. There they go again, saying we're going in the wrong direction! Don't mind them, folks – they're just wacko kooks. They'll never be fashionable. Good riddance. Here we go! TO ETERNITY OR BUST!

"Man, are we zooming now! We're almost at our destination! Hold onto your suitcases, everybody! See that cliff up ahead? Yep, that's where we're headed! Okay, we're almost there! Three, two, one, wheeeeeeeeeee! We're sailing off the cliff and into the air! What? You're asking why we're going down? Because that's Eternity for you! And look at all the other buses all around that ran off the same cliff and are headed down! Hey, look – there's the Mormon Bus! And there's the Muslim Bus! And there's the Buddhist Bus! And there's the Hindu Bus! And what do you know – take a look over there – it's the black Party Bus! And so many other buses

from all over! You're *all* going to the same place! See, you *all* have the same mark on your foreheads! You're *all* going to where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched, and there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, and you will be tormented by fire and brimstone, and the smoke of your torment will go up forever and ever!

"Yeah! I made it past the True Gospel Bus without anyone being transformed into a new creature! Chalk another full Fashionable Gospel Bus up to Eternity in Hell! Oh, hey everybody, I've gotta go. I have another bus to drive. See ya!"

Outside the Camp

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