

**“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have THE LIGHT OF LIFE.” Jn. 8:12. “And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his DISCIPLES came unto him; And he taught THEM, saying, ...YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Mat. 5:1,2,14-16.**

Here the local, visible, tiny, self-governing, Calvinistic-in-dogma, prophesying, sin-rebuking, discipline-exercising, baptizing by immersion, and persecuted CHURCH of the Lord Jesus Christ; – (i.e., e.g., think, WBC, Westboro Baptist Church); – I say, such a true New Testament church is here likened unto a prominent, shining, inescapably-visible-from-every-point-of-the-compass – (i.e., 360 degrees round about) – *“city set on a hill.”* In fact, such a description may be said to belong exclusively to a New Testament Church, and to rule out as heretical pretenders and blasphemers all others than those described herein. Another Holy Ghost-inspired description of a true New Testament Church – also known as the church militant, meaning the church still alive on earth in contrast to the church at rest in Heaven – I say another description of the church militant is found at the Song of Solomon 6:10; to wit:

***“Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, FAIR AS THE MOON, CLEAR AS THE SUN, AND TERRIBLE AS AN ARMY WITH BANNERS.” (Song of Solomon 6:10)***

Talk about “transparency.” That’s the big word in politics nowadays: TRANSPARENCY. Too much secrecy in the government. Each side promising to let the people know what’s going on, and each side claiming the other side is up to no good, transacting all government business behind closed doors. Then they get elected promising total TRANSPARENCY! No sooner do the new guys take office than – guess what – they begin spending trillions of tax money behind closed doors – worse than the old guys. Obama is the worst offender of all. When he was running for president he swore by all the gods of all the religions and all the angels and all the saints, – (he’s ecumenical, you know; he prays to, “To Whom It May Concern”) – that his administration would be the most transparent administration in the history of the nation.

Well, sir, no sooner was he sworn in than he began meeting secretly with Union lobbyists and members of Congress to line up support for various projects – including a multi-trillion dollar health care reform bill. Some thousands of pages later and, voila! A bill is presented for final voting processes, several thousands of pages, loaded with pork to “buy” the votes of reluctant congressmen; and, Beloved, only the unlikely providential election of a new Republican senator to fill the vacancy of Ted Kennedy from Boston, who died – also fortuitously – I say, but for that unlikely event, thereby denying Obama his 60-vote so-called “super majority” in the Senate, Obama would have his anything-but-TRANSPARENT multi-trillion dollar health care reform. Not so with the administration of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ; to wit:

***“LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.” (Mat. 5:16)***

Again I say, Talk about TRANSPARENCY (!)(!)(!). Light is a glorious thing. The first command of the Great God Almighty respecting His new creation; to wit:

***“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.”(Gen. 1:1-4)***

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How beautiful (!) And just that certainly has God decreed that light doth flow and shall flow from the beautiful city on the hill – i.e., the church, the true New Testament Church. It is not possible to hide – i.e., to douse, or otherwise extinguish the flame – the beautiful, shining city on the hill; to wit: ***“Ye are the light of the world”*** – (compare with the First Command of the new creation: And God said, ***“Let there be light, And there was light.” Gen. 1:4.***) – ***“A city that is set on an hill CANNOT BE HID.” Matt. 5:14.*** Should we not take heart, Beloved. We have more than abundant evidence – (as the common law says, evidence that establishes proof beyond a reasonable doubt) – to believe that our Father placed us upon this hill; and ordered His holy light to shine; and no power on earth or in Hell can hide that light.

Beloved, I dearly love that sentence. Is it not true? We have abundant, competent, material, relevant, satisfying evidence, that establishes proof beyond a reasonable doubt – maybe even beyond a shadow of a doubt – that our Father placed Westboro Baptist Church upon this hill; and ordered His holy light to shine forth from us to all the world; and no power on earth or in Hell can hide that light. It cannot be hid (!). Hath not the Holy God on high given a direct order for the light to shine in our otherwise dark hearts? And is not that the supernatural reflected light of the Savior, the Sun of righteousness arising with healing in His wings? – (***“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” Mal. 4:2.***) – Indeed, it is; to wit: ***“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,”*** – (i.e., in **Gen. 1:3**) – ***“hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. 4:6.***

This wonderful verse of Scripture – (i.e., **2 Cor. 4:6**) – beautifully, succinctly, and accurately describes the workings of God in the IRRESISTIBLE call of each of God’s Elect to salvation in the glorious work of redemption. It is the “I” in John Calvin’s theological TULIP – (i.e., T-U-L-“I”-P) – metaphorically put for the indispensable doctrine of grace illustrated by the following song; which each of God’s Elect thankfully and gratefully sing; to wit:

*“Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature’s night;  
Thine eye diffused a quick’ning ray; I woke; the dungeon blazed with light;  
My chains fell off; my heart was free; I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.”*

The name of that blessed doctrine is IRRESISTIBLE GRACE. Thank God for irresistible grace – without such free and sovereign grace there is no salvation for any of the rebel seed of Adam; and without God’s grace being supernaturally forced upon him not a single son or daughter of Adam would be saved. Isaac Watts – (1674-1748, 74-years old when he died), – the great English pastor and hymn writer, wrote over 750 hymns, and was called “the father of English hymnody.” On the day of Watts’ death, Matthew Arnold declared his well-known hymn, “When I Survey The Wondrous Cross,” to be the finest hymn in the English language. Others include “O God, Our Help In Ages Past,” and, “Jesus Shall Reign Where’er The Sun.”

It is my opinion that a study of, The Psalms and Hymns of Isaac Watts, a book of 599 pages wherein are published the words of all his hymns together with a plenary index of the first lines of each, and a table of each and every Scripture passage to be found in each Gospel song and hymn – I say, all of this material is contained in one 599-page book, published afresh in 1997 by the Soli Deo Gloria Publications (to God alone be the glory), of Morgan, Penn.; and each member of Westboro Baptist Church has a copy of that book and a copy of the Bible – and, I say, that it is my opinion that a study of the Watts hymn-book, together with the Bible, is far better than a theological doctor’s degree from the finest theological school or seminary in the world. And is further my opinion, that if a person does NOT have a working knowledge of Watts’ hymns and the Bible, that person is an ignorant person, no matter how many degrees he has.

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(As an aside, when Thomas Jefferson was president of the United States, he was also, ex officio, the school superintendent for the District of Columbia; and Jefferson mandated that two books be required as official text books for all students; to wit: the Watts book of hymns, and the Bible [!] A few years back I appeared before our local school board with a copy of Watts' book and told that story about Jefferson, with the suggestion that we might try it locally, and see what effect it had on Topeka students, academically and morally. I left a copy of Watts' book with the board members, figuring that they already had a Bible. A few weeks later, the board's attorney (Joe Zima) returned Watts' book of hymns to me, with a note declining my suggestion).

You will soon understand why I am touting Watts and his hymns, in connection with a sermon on IRRESISTIBLE GRACE. A bit more biographical data about Watts may help you remember this sermon; to wit: At age 28, Watts became pastor of Mark Lane Chapel, which was a large Congregational church in London, whose members included the Lord Mayor of London. Although ill health forced his virtual retirement within a few years, the congregation insisted that he remain pastor as long as he lived. The Lord Mayor, his wife and his family, cared for Watts in their own large home, giving Watts time and freedom to write hymns and prepare sermons most of his days on earth.

Watts never married, though he did propose to Elizabeth Singer, who rebuffed him with these words: "*Mr. Watts, I only wish I could say that I admire the casket as I admire the jewel.*" In other words, Liz told him: "I like your songs, Isaac; but you are one ugly dude (!)!" Ugly or not, Watts seems to have captured the true meaning and sense of the doctrines of grace, as well as the practical application of the blessed doctrine of IRRESISTIBLE GRACE to God's Elect, in such beautiful hymns as, "How Sweet and Awful Is The Place, With Christ Within The Doors" (referring to a sense of our dear Lord Jesus being present with us when the church gathers to present ourselves before the Lord, as at preaching services and the Lord's Supper). Watts was, indeed, a jewel of a preacher and hymn-writer.

***"Let there be light!*** (commands the Lord God) ***and there was light, and the Lord saw the light that it was good.*** **Gen. 1:1-4.** At the time of conversion, "***Let there be light!***" At troublesome times, when our way is often dark and temporarily uncertain; "***Let there be light!***" At church meeting and praying and preaching times for the church; "***Let there be light!***" At times of great and perplexing sorrow, when we need comforting AND the Comforter; "***Let there be light!***" Isaac Watts, front and center at all such times, with a word to the weary; to wit:

*"How sweet and awful is the place  
With Christ within the doors,  
While everlasting love displays  
The choicest of her stores.  
Here ev'ry bowel of our God,  
With soft compassion rolls;  
Here peace and pardon, both by blood,  
Are food for dying souls.  
While all our hearts and all our songs,  
Join to admire the feast;  
Each of us cries, with thankful tongue,  
Lord, why was I a guest?  
Why was I made to hear thy voice,  
And enter while there's room;  
When millions make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come?  
'Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced us in;  
Else we had still refused to taste,  
And perished in our sin.  
Pity the nations, O my God!  
Constrain thy flock to come;  
Send thy victorious word abroad,  
And bring thy pilgrims home.  
We long to see the Gentiles full,  
That all the chosen race,  
May with one voice, and heart, and soul,  
Sing IRRESISTIBLE GRACE."*

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Just at the head of this beautiful hymn, Watts, as his custom was, placed the Biblical citation of authority for the message; to wit: *“Divine love making a feast and calling in the guests. Lk. 14:17,22,23.”* Operative words and phrases: Let there be light. Compel them to come in. Why was I a guest? Constrain Thy flock to come. His love sweetly forced us in. Whereas, as to all the non-Elect, they have no light because a sovereign God has never commanded the light to shine unto them, but has chosen to leave them in gross darkness; to wit:

***“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; In whom the god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” 2 (2 Cor. 4:3,4)***

Only those who follow and serve the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth have light all along their pathway; to wit:

***“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me SHALL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS, BUT SHALL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE.”(Jn. 8:12.)***

The conversion experience is often referred to as seeing the light, and the foremost example of seeing the light is the conversion experience of the apostle Paul, as related in Acts, chapter 9. It came to pass as the apostle was traveling with his entourage from Jerusalem to Damascus, on a trip of violent persecution to arrest Christians in Damascus and return them bound to Jerusalem for prison or death.

At that time Paul was famous for *“breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.”* Acts 9:1. The last thing in the world Paul was contemplating was “seeing the light” and becoming a Christian. To the contrary, he was probably the world’s foremost anti-Christian fanatic. When, all of a sudden, a scene of pure religious drama ensued on the road to Damascus – thereafter to be forever known as Paul’s “Damascus Road Conversion;” to wit:

***“And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus; and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.”(Acts 9:3-7)***

Note that the spectacular display of divine power overwhelmed Paul and caused his conversion, and it were silliness to argue otherwise. And if at any time the Lord God Almighty wanted to similarly overwhelm and save this person, or that person, or the whole of mankind – He could easily do so. Put another way, Paul was not merely invited to the salvation feast. He was “COMPELLED to come in.” The operative word is “COMPELLED.” When left to themselves, all the invitees *“with one consent began to make (frivolous) excuses”* as to why they could not make it to the feast. Lk. 14:18-20. Put another way, God’s imputation of saving grace, is, to His Elect, absolutely and unconditionally “IRRESISTIBLE.”

***“Go out into the highways and hedges, and COMPEL them to come in.”(Lk. 14:23)***

Watts’ hymns: *“Why was I MADE TO HEAR HIS VOICE AND ENTER WHILE THERE’S ROOM?”* His love *“SWEETLY FORCED US IN.”* *“His flock is CONSTRAINED TO COME IN.”* Grace is irresistible.

I love you. Amen.