

A Liberal Salvation for Man

By Janet S. Porter

The Life and History of Phineas Wolcott Cook
pp. 19-22, using his own words when possible

CHARACTERS (3 – 2 males and 1 female)

Phineas Wolcott Cook (PWC)

Ann Eliza (his wife)

Methodist Minister

PWC: There must be a way to save our chickens. Every day another one is missing from the chicken coop.

Ann Eliza: Did you talk to the neighbors? Maybe they have a clue.

PWC: All they say is that a hawk or owl can fly off with them, but these chickens are in a chicken coop with a good strong roof.

Ann Eliza: There's something more important to talk about.

PWC: And what is that?

Ann Eliza: The Methodist Minister is coming over this afternoon. He sent his boy to tell me after church on Sunday.

PWC: And why would he want to speak to me?

Ann Eliza: You haven't been very cooperative in meetings, you know.

PWC: It's because I don't believe the Lord made a part of his children to be saved and the greater part to be damned to all eternity. That would come in contact with the saying that nothing was made in vain.

Ann Eliza: I think they're tired of arguing about it. And speaking of the minister, I see him walking toward our house right now.

(The minister knocks and Phineas lets him in.)

PWC: Please, come sit down by the fire. It's getting cold out there. *(They all sit down)*

Minister: Thank you, Brother Cook.

Ann Eliza: Would you like a cup of hot tea?

Minister: No, thank you. I'll get right to the point. Brother Cook, you were received into the Methodist Church six months ago on probation because you couldn't profess faith in the creed. Now it is important to establish your beliefs and come to a final conclusion about your membership.

PWC: Yes, I understand. I've raised a lot of questions.

Minister: I know you have questions. I think that is why I'm here. Raising those questions in our church meetings has become very uncomfortable.

PWC: It's just that I have read the Bible all my life, and I honestly believe God intends for all His children to learn the truth and have the gift of Salvation. In fact, our Savior Jesus Christ gave His life for all mankind, not just the few who are members of certain churches.

Minister: That's exactly the point with which I find fault. If you cannot take what we say on faith, perhaps...

PWC: The truth is, I believe with all my heart that God intended a more liberal salvation for the family of man. I will never believe there are some destined to be damned to all eternity. I don't care who said it; that idea is not in the Bible!

Minister: This isn't the first time I've been put to my wit's end to carry my point. You just won't give this up.

PWC: No, sir. I won't. I have such a strong feeling about it.

Minister: I'm afraid I must report you to the church.

PWC: Then perhaps you should, for as long as we cannot agree, I think it may be better for us to be apart.

Ann Eliza: But Phineas, aren't you being hasty. You have said many times you're searching for religion. If you throw this out, what will you have?

PWC: For many months I have investigated all the different creeds and had many discussions with Universalists and many others, including the Methodists. Yet they all find fault with me because I believe from the Bible that salvation was intended by God for every single one of His children.

Minister: And that is where we disagree.

PWC: I have tried to find peace within Methodism, but I cannot. You may take my name off if you choose.

Minister: Then we shall part. I hope for your sake you can find your true religion.

PWC: I hope so too.

(Phineas and the Minister leave the stage. Then Phineas comes running back in.)

PWC: Ann Eliza, I solved the problem!

Ann Eliza: Did you tell the minister before he left?

PWC: Not that problem. It's the problem with the chickens. I found several piles of chicken bones with the flesh picked off out in the trees and bushes. There is definitely something carrying them off and eating them. I think it must be the owls because there have been several around here every evening at dusk, and I found a window open in the chicken coop.

Ann Eliza: And did you shut the window.

PWC: No, I certainly did not. I left it open. But tonight I'm going to sit out there and watch who comes to kill our chickens. My gun will be brought to bear on them and that will put an end to this intrusion.

Ann Eliza: At least you have found the way to save the chickens.

PWC: And I'm determined to find God's true religion which teaches the doctrine of Jesus Christ. I know He made salvation possible for *all* mankind. I can save the chickens, but I know God can save every one of us if we just know the way. When I hear the right doctrine, I'll know it's true.

Ann Eliza: I think you will. You'll know it's true.

Family Discussion:

The major religions of the time believed in the Calvinist idea that a few are chosen to be saved and most people will be damned. How did Phineas know a gospel principle even trained ministers did not know?

What scriptures do you think he read to convince him of a liberal salvation for all men?

Some suggestions:

Isaiah 49:24-25 (the captives delivered...and I will save thy children)

Isaiah 53:4, 12 (borne our griefs; carried our sorrows...made intercession for the transgressors)

Isaiah 55:1, 7 "Every one that thirsteth, come ye; buy without price...he will abundantly pardon)

John 1:29 (The Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world)

Romans 8:31 and 37-38 (No height...(Nothing) can separate us from the love of God.)

Hebrews 9:12 (By his own blood...obtained eternal redemption for us)

Revelation 21:3-4 (...God shall wipe away all tears...and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.)