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04 Work Out Your Own Salvation

Signs Of The Times

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WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION.

“Wherefore, my beloved, seeing ye have always obeyed, not am in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” – {[Php 2:12-13](#)}.

My Beloved Brethren: – This text shows that the saints in Christ Jesus are the possessors of salvation, not as having worked for it and thus obtained it, but as their inheritance in Christ, in whom their Father and God freely gave them all things, as freely as he gave them his beloved Son. God is love, and he loved all his chosen people in Christ with everlasting love, even as he loved him; therefore, with loving kindness he draws them to him, and sheds his love abroad in their hearts by the holy Spirit. So they are taught of God to love one another, for they are his own dear children in his well-beloved Son, and Paul was endeared to them as his beloved brethren. He commends them for their obedience of faith and love in Christ from the first, since God had given them in the behalf of Christ to believe on him, and also to suffer for his sake. Christ was so precious to them, and his love so blessedly and powerfully constrained them in their self-denying work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope, that they were even much more obedient in the absence of their beloved Paul than they had been in his presence with them, to the comfort and joy of his heart. And so he inspires them to thus continue on in the commendable manifestation of their salvation, which God had so mercifully bestowed upon them.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” The beginning of their salvation, as wrought in them, had been with fear

and trembling, as in the experience of the jailer, and in everyone who knows the blessing and joy of salvation. And so, they were to continue on in witnessing, experiencing, testifying of and making known their salvation, even as it had been begun in them. The good tree works out the life and nature given it, as is evidenced by its growth, its leaves, blossoms and fruit. “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” The child of God neither grows nor bears divine fruit by any free will or voluntary effort of its own, but always by the power of the divine life within. This mysterious life-force is unseen and silent, yet mighty and wonderful, as shown in the natural world, and much more in the spiritual. The Lord says of his, “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” This living water possesses the power of an endless life, and therefore it can never be successfully resisted nor suppressed, though the flesh of its possessor will struggle, complain and oppose, but grace much more abounds than sin, and life is more mighty than death, for Christ, who is our life, swallowed up death in victory, and the life of Jesus is made manifest in our mortal flesh. “For greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.” The Spirit prevails over the flesh. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Free from their enslavement and cruel bondage, their dominion and sting. But still there is an antagonism and conflict in every heir of salvation; therefore, our salvation is necessarily worked out or made manifest with fear and trembling, and there is much wrestling in the soul, with strong crying and tears unto God. His children are sojourners, pilgrims and strangers in this sin-blighted world, encompassed with infirmity and mortal weakness, the world and the flesh and the devil being against them, so that they are made to cry out, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!” Thus, it is with fear and trembling that they even claim the promise of eternal life and the hope of salvation, and can seldom “read their title clear to mansions in the skies.” The words,

“your own salvation,” clearly express the precious truth that salvation is a glorious possession, our own inheritance, our Father’s gift to us as his children. And because it is ours, we are to work it out, not neglect it, but abide and walk in it, for in it is our life and joy, and in its heavenly fruitfulness in us the beauties of holiness and salvation are manifested, and our Father is glorified in us. This is the blessed and holy purpose of God in the salvation of his people in Christ Jesus, and unto this end he chose them and blessed them with all spiritual blessings, that they should be without blame before him in love and show forth his praise. Our God and Savior will not be disappointed in this divine purpose, but all his chosen and predestinated people shall be to the praise of the glory of his grace; therefore the inspired psalmist David said, “All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.” It is in their hearts to do all this, for the Lord writes his laws in their hearts, and so with delight do they talk of his power and his mighty acts in their salvation, joyfully telling what great things the Lord has done for them, whereof they are glad. The humble in spirit bear these things, and they are glad. So far, then, from the dear children of God doing religious works in order to obtain some sort of salvation as a recompense for their works, the text shows that they work out the salvation which is already their own, and theirs by inheritance, “not of works.” It is eminently proper that a son who inherits a farm or vineyard from his father should appreciate it with grateful affection, be interested in it and work it out, or be occupied with it. Moreover, the loving and faithful father will so bring up his son and teach him that it will be his delight to do his father’s will, and thus please and honor him. This is blessedly true of our Father in heaven and his children, for he bestows his love upon them, and their meat and drink and blessed reward is in doing his will; therefore all their service is the work of love, the devotion of gratitude and praise, and not done that they may obtain salvation as a reward. This last is the motive or incentive of all legal religion,

and it is always selfish, for it asks, “What shall we have therefore!” and expects or demands salvation for the works of service. Whether the salvation worked for be in time only or unto eternity, the principle is the same – it is salvation of works.

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Salvation is a good work, the work of righteousness, the merciful deliverance from sin, the justification unto holiness, and this is the work of the Father and Son and Spirit. Salvation is the most glorious and blessed work in all the universe of God, and in it he is more infinitely magnified and glorified than in all his works of creation and providence. “God hath in the person of his Son all his mightiest works outdone.” For in all his other works, God spoke the word only, and they were done; but his work of salvation cost him the sacrifice of his darling Son, in whom was all his delight and glory. Of this Son Simeon said, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

The work of salvation is two-fold in its manifestation: it is wrought for us, and also wrought in us. In both respects it is our own salvation. The text presents salvation as it is wrought in us, and as we are made the blessed partakers of it. In this connection Paul calls it a good work, saying, “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” A good work is the work of righteousness, and its fruit is salvation. Of the Lord it is written, “His work is perfect.” Jesus said, “There is none good, but One; that is, God.” “Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.”

Of the good pleasure of God, he worketh in his children. He not only begins the good work of salvation in them, but he also performs it, even until the day of Jesus Christ, the day of his full revelation in eternal glory, when all his saints shall be perfected in his righteousness and bear his heavenly image. This is salvation begun in them in time, and ended in blest eternity. There is no opposing

power that can prevent or hinder when God “worketh,” for he is omnipotent in all his work, and says, “I will do all my pleasure.” The Lord God Almighty never tries to work and fails, neither does he ever want anything that he cannot obtain, for then he would be fallible, like man; but “what his soul desireth, even that he doeth,” and he will perform the good work in us which he has begun. In this divine assurance was Paul’s confidence for his brethren in Christ. And upon this solid rock he inspired the beloved children of God with the full assurance of faith in Christ Jesus that salvation is their own blissful heritage and possession, and has the blessed God for its Author, who also worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Therefore, seeing that the God of salvation and comfort had begun the good work in them, giving them repentance towards him, and rejoicing faith in the Lord Jesus, “the resurrection and the life,” they had from the first yielded the fruits of loving obedience in their believing hearts; but the apostle was thus enabled to encourage them to continue on in the good begun work of salvation, and work it out, make it manifest and rejoice in it. For their salvation is of God, who will surely perform the good work in them, working in them both the good will and the good work of his good pleasure. All this divine assurance Paul gives his beloved brethren, both then and now. And because of this solemn truth that their God wrought in them, this faithful servant knew that the work of God in their hearts would inspire them with fear and trembling, and that thus they should be the manifest witnesses of their own salvation, showing it forth with fear and trembling. It would be trifling with sacred things to say that we can at our will be filled with fear and trembling, or that we can bid these solemn emotions to leave us at our pleasure. Yet the only way that we do or can work out our own salvation is with fear and trembling, which are not voluntary on our part, but are always manifest in us when God’s power is wrought in us, subduing our rebellious will, making us willing for his will to be done, and giving us strength in our weakness to do his will. When the Lord so worketh in us, then there always will be fear and trembling in our soul. So, when the glory of the Lord shone round about the

shepherds, they were sore afraid. And Paul preached the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, yet it was in demonstration of the Spirit and in power, that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. God's work and power will always bring everyone in whom he works into fear and trembling before him, for that one is made to realize the great solemnity of the work of salvation, and his entire unworthiness of this great salvation, to either possess it or testify of it; therefore he will do so with fear and trembling, and will ascribe salvation to the Lord, but never to his own works, saying, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory."

It is both passing strange and lamentable, when any who have known the power of God in salvation, will contend that the children of God, in whom he works both to will and to do of his good pleasure, may yet be unwilling and refuse to do what he has wrought in them. This would be to defeat and disappoint the Lord God omnipotent who reigneth, and who said to our Savior, by whom grace reigns, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness." To take such a position as this, is "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." To say that those who realize their great need of salvation, and that it is worth more to them than all the world, in whom God worketh both the willing mind and the power to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, that they may still refuse to do that which they are most willing to do, which God wants them to do and they want to do, is a very ridiculous and absurd notion. But, my beloved brethren, we rejoice that our God of wisdom and power and love does not thus trifle with his dear people, nor so teach them, for his word is in power, saying, "I will," and "they shall." But now, because this is true, the carnal and fault-finding objection of old is being made, that this takes away our responsibility, our sacred obligations in the gospel of salvation, and reduces us to mere passive machines; that it is Antinomianism, do-nothingism and fatalism.

Legalism has from of old till now thus replied against God, and exposed its spirit of rebellion against the sovereign power and way and work of God in the salvation of his people, and the Scriptures testify that it shall ever be so till our Lord shall come again. Therefore, the people whom God graciously reconciles unto himself in Christ Jesus, who say with him, “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight,” must be reproached and spoken against, as he was. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” And all the hard speeches, reproaches and epithets against the Lord and his reconciled people, from all faultfinders, arise from the carnal mind, and he rebukes them all, saying, “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?”

That we may see how unfounded and untrue are all such replies, we need only consider that all life and its activities of whatever nature are from God; that to his people he gave eternal life and all spiritual blessings in his Son, and so every heavenly emotion and spiritual function or activity in us and by us is from the life of Christ, but not from natural life; that the Lord ordains peace for his saints, and has wrought all their good works in them; that not only does God begin the good work of grace and salvation in his beloved people, but he worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure, and will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. And thus it is fully shown in the sacred oracles of God that all the spiritual wisdom and understanding and knowledge of his believing children, with all their faith and hope and love, their work of faith’ and labor of love, and all their willing and active service and obedience and sacrifice, in doing and in suffering the will of God, is because he thus worketh in them of his good pleasure, so that his good pleasure becomes also theirs. “Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto

him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen,” says Paul again, He also says, “Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.” Our Leader and perfect Teacher himself said, “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” Much more dependent are we upon the Father that dwelleth in us to do the good works, and perform the work of righteousness unto salvation in us until the day or revelation of Christ. Shall it now also be said that his own precious doctrine makes him as passive as a lifeless machine? O shame! where is thy blush?

So far from this blessed doctrine of God our Savior justifying such slanderous reports against it, just the opposite is true; for all the spiritual devotions and mighty activities of the saints of all ages, their loving and willing sacrifices in the service of their God, their patient endurance in tribulation and persecution for his sake, their abiding steadfast in the faith of the Son of God, who loved them and gave himself for them, and their overcoming through the blood of the Lamb – all, all is from this God-honoring and glorious truth: “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

D. BARTLEY.

06 Time Salvation

Signs of The Times
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TIME SALVATION.

Beloved: – The Old Baptist people have long been troubled with the confusing doctrines of “means of salvation,” “means of grace,” and such like; but not until the present young generation rose up, who assume to be wise above all the fathers, has the confusing and uncertain Sound of “conditional time salvation” been trumpeted forth in almost all the camps of Israel. The last ten years this strange and startling blast of trumpets has echoed and reechoed with exciting and bewildering effect, and great has been the widespread confusion and division, where peace and good will prevailed before. This dividing of salvation, and subdividing it into fragments and parts, partly eternal salvation, and partly time salvation, (as the teachers of this yea and nay gospel call it,) they boast i ugly claim, is “rightly dividing the word.” It certainly has a dividing quality, for it has scattered the flock. Yea, it has brought bitter strife and alienation into the rank and file of the conditional Baptists themselves. Thus, has God confounded their language, and they cannot understand one another. And, as did the confused Midianites, they are now falling upon one another in deadly strife. But the remnant according to the election of grace, the little band with their spiritual Gideon, break their earthen pitchers that the light may shine out, and should, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” By this they conquer, for the Lord fights for them and gives them the victory.

Let us now consider salvation in the light of the Lord as revealed in the word. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” “Salvation” is a Bible term, and it runs all through the divine book, being used very many times, yet it is always the one single, simple word, never plural, complex or compounded. “Salvation.” The plural word, “salvations,” is not in the holy Bible. This term, “salvations,” so common and popular now, belongs to the literature of a yea and nay gospel, but it is not in the gospel of Christ. This late

word, “salvations,” is incomplete without another word, “conditional,” joined to it. For the recent salvations, so much talked of, which depend upon creature obedience, are necessarily conditional. Any conditional salvation is legal, yea and nay, and most uncertain. There is no grace at all in any conditional salvation, because the grace of God is free, unconditional, never sold and never bought. “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” “And if by grace, then it is no more of works.” All conditional salvation calls for works to obtain it, for something must be done. So, grace is entirely excluded from the yea and nay doctrine of conditional salvations. The teachers of conditional salvation have not yet presumed to say the grace of God is conditional, and so all conditionalism is a denial of salvation by grace.

Conditional Baptists, however, seem to think that they take away the objectionable feature of Arminianism or conditional salvation, by confining it to time, and so they qualify this legal doctrine of salvation by works by inserting the word “time” between the two words, conditional salvation, and make it read, “Conditional time salvation;” that is to say, salvation in time is conditional. If so, then salvation in time is not by grace, nor of the Lord. Now it behooves us to know what salvation is, when it is, and who it is to. Salvation is redemption, deliverance; it is always in time, and it is always to the lost. No one who is not lost can be saved. The one who knows what to do, and can do it, is not lost. So, doing conditions is not salvation at all, but merely working for a reward. We never go to salvation, because salvation is righteousness and justification, and we are sinful; but salvation must and does always come to us as lost. Salvation has no meaning to the one who is not lost, but claims ability to do and obtain the desired good. It is hypocritical to call that which is within our own power salvation. So long as Peter stood on the water, he did not pray, “Lord save me.” Such a cry would have been false then; but when he had no power left, then the prayer was one of need, and salvation came to him.

When is salvation? Does it take place in eternity? or in time? It is important that we understand when salvation is. While the Bible clearly shows that God's purpose to save his chosen and predestinated people in Christ is eternal, the divine testimony is abundant and clear, that all the work of their full and glorious salvation unto holiness and a blissful immortality is begun and ended in time. This triple work of the Father, Son and Spirit, three in One, consists in redemption, regeneration and resurrection. The resurrection of all the redeemed and heaven-born people of God shall take place at the last day of time. And so, Christ said of all the church, that the Father's will is that "I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." And of every believer in him he says, "And I will raise him up at the last day." The last day is a part of time. The resurrection of all the dead, who sleep in Christ, is the completion and crowning glory of their salvation. This is in time. Redemption from the law of sin and death, by the death of the Son of God, is in time. So is salvation by his risen life in time. Paul says, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." This salvation by his life includes being born again, and passing from death unto life. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." All this is wrought in time. Paul therefore says, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." That is, until the full revelation of Christ in you in his resurrection, power and glory. Until that glorious day, God will perform the good work of salvation in you. O this is assuring and blessed, my beloved! In this faith Paul said, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." This is the full glory of our ascended Lord Jesus Christ. God, who exalted him at his own right hand of power, will perform his blessed

work of salvation in us until the redemption of the purchased possession. “Then we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

All the work of salvation is fulfilled in time. But the adjective, the long and dangerous handle, “conditional,” is not found in the Bible as belonging to our time salvation. But this is true: “Salvation is of the Lord,” and salvation is in time. All the redeemed of the Lord shall be saved in time. “Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!”

All legal teachers, who strive to burden the salvation of the Lord’s people with conditions, are putting a yoke upon their necks which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear, but which is a curse and snare to the people, and a reproach upon salvation. But when they think that they have improved upon Arminian conditional salvation by inserting the word “time” in it, they are deceiving and being deceived, for this is the day of salvation. “(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.)” So any one who is not saved in time has no salvation. Therefore, the modern term, “conditional time salvation,” means no more nor less than conditional salvation. To prove this, they must first prove that Jesus is a conditional Savior. This they dare not attempt to do. Salvation is of the Lord and in Christ. Yea, he himself is Salvation. “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” “Neither is there salvation in any other.” Then there is no salvation in conditions nor in man. “For by grace are ye saved: “not of works.” “Truly my soul waiteth upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God.” David here personified the man Christ and every member of Christ. As this was true of David and Christ under the law, is it not equally true of us under the gospel of grace? Since God only was the rock and salvation of his people under the old covenant,

which was conditional, is he any the less their only rock and salvation under the new covenant in Christ Jesus, which is free from all conditions!

The Lord said, “For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” This is a perfect description of conditional salvation; for it can hold no water of salvation.

But blessed be the Lord of salvation, Jesus saves his people from their sins, gives them the water of life, and says, “The water that I shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” This is all my salvation and all my desire.

And now, brethren, I command you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

D BARTLEY

07 The Supremacy of God

Signs Of The Times
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THE SUPREMACY OF GOD.

Beloved Brethren: – A dear brother in Christ urges me to write for the SIGNS upon two statements of Paul, as follows:

“Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.” – {[Ac 27:21](#)}.

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” – {[Eph 1:11](#)}.

We believe that the apostle Paul was an inspired servant of God; that the ways of God are just and equal, and do not conflict; that there is, therefore, no contradiction between these two statements of Paul, nor between the other inspired oracles of God. But we may sadly fail to rightly understand the Scriptures, because we are very finite, and so not perceive their harmony; hence there may be difficulties in our minds, and confliction in our views; but all things are known unto God, who saw the end from the beginning. This fact should teach us our dependence upon the Lord for a true understanding of the word of truth, and humble us, as well as teach us to be charitable toward one another.

In the first text for our consideration, Paul spoke to the master and owner of the ship, and to the Roman officer, whose prisoner he was, whom he had before warned of this shipwreck and danger, but against his prophetic warning they had sailed away from Crete, which was defiant and perverse in them, after this kind and faithful prophet of God had told them that it would be with hurt and much damage. This is according to God’s purpose and way. Before sin entered into the world, the Lord said to man, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” But, like the master of the ship, Adam would not hearken. Yet God was not disappointed in either case, nor his purpose overthrown, for he foreknew the end, with all the consequences; therefore, in his goodness and mercy, he made provision for the deliverance of the rebellious. His foreknown vessels of mercy were in Adam, so his servant Paul was in the endangered ship. In all the transgressions of rebellious man, he is left without excuse, for God has commanded and warned him, and

the creature is under a supreme obligation to obey the supreme Creator. Therefore in every case, the sin and fault, violation and wrong are man's, and the throne of the Most High is spotless and holy. Man is the author of his own sin. The supreme Ruler has the absolute right to command, warn and punish sinful man, or to have mercy upon him and send him deliverance. The Scriptures abundantly show all this, both by precept and example. The salvation of all in the ark of Noah, but the destruction of the wicked world by the flood, is a solemn instance. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth," and for this wickedness he sent the flood. The Most High has not left himself without witness in the righteous visitation of his judgments upon the earth, for holy men of God have been raised up and sent to foretell to men the fearful consequences of their persistent wickedness, which should come upon them. But both the Bible and the world's history testify that "the heart of man is deceitful, and desperately wicked."

Paul affirms, in the last text, that in Christ the saints have obtained an inheritance, "Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." This is a very great and wonderful revelation of truth. Another like it is, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." – {([Ro 8:28](#))}. All things work together for good to all those, for the reason that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, as says the inspired Paul. This applies to all events in all times and places relative to the called of God according to his purpose, because his dominion and power are unlimited and supreme. And so no event can possibly arise without the knowledge and leave of God. With him there can be neither surprises nor accidents. If such a thing could be, it would destroy the sovereignty or supremacy of God, because it would deny either his wisdom to foresee, or his power to prevent the chance event, or both. But the Scriptures abundantly teach the self-evident truth, that our God is infinite in wisdom, and omnipotent in power, and that he therefore both foreknew all things,

and controls all things. To deny this is simply to un-deify the Almighty, and deny his eternal Godhead. And to deny this universal supremacy of Jehovah, would be to admit chance and chaos into God's universe, and so overturn his government, defeat his eternal purpose, and subject all to anarchy and ruin. But we rejoice that blind and ruinous chance cannot obtain in God's universal dominion, and that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Our dear Lord assures us that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the notice of our Father in heaven. The text connects all things with the infinite and eternal and immutable counsel of God's will, therefore there cannot arise any device of men or devils, nor any wicked thing against his counsel, to defeat his purpose. If such a thing were possible, then some of the predestinated unto the adoption of children might fail to obtain the heavenly inheritance in Christ; then Paul and all in the storm-wrecked ship might have perished; then some mishap in the long chain of calamitous events in the afflictions of Joseph, or in the afflictions of Moses and the children of Israel in Egypt, might have changed all, and defeated the divine mercy, goodness and blessing there was in it all. Yet the envious brethren of Joseph wickedly sold him into slavery, but God sent him into Egypt. And most cruelly and wickedly did the Egyptians and Pharaoh oppress the enslaved chosen people of God, yet the Lord said to Pharaoh, "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." Truly then God's counsel was in all those great and mighty things, and his wisdom and power brought great and lasting good to his people, and glory to his name through those trying things. Therefore "the sweet psalmist of Israel," who understood all those things, would exultingly exclaim in praise to God, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Surely then it was according to the eternal purpose of God that the wrath of man should praise him, and that he should restrain the remainder of wrath. So in the purpose and counsel of God, he has limited and bounded the wrath of mankind, just as truly as he has fixed a limit to the seas, saying, "Thus far shalt

thou come, and here shalt thy proud waves be staid.” With David we may rejoice that it is so. The psalmist says, “Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear asunder: he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet. He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.” David says again, “For the kingdom is the Lord’s; and he is the Governor among the nations.” And so a great heathen king was humbled and made to say, “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me; and I blessed the Most High; and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? “Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.” – Daniel iv. Well did this king know this, for God had abased him, and taught him to thus confess the supremacy of the Most High. In this is the safety of God’s people. His dominion is over all worlds and beings and things. Therefore, says Paul, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.”

As a most momentous and solemn instance of this truth, and the truth of the text, let me refer to the ancient prophecies of the life and persecutions, the cruel betrayal and mocking’s, scourging and

crucifixion, of the meek and lamb-like Jesus of Nazareth, for every event of all this was determined and foretold hundreds of years before their awful fulfillment, and so were embraced in the counsel of God. The very persons engaged in this most wicked of all wicked murders, were also foretold, as Judas and the high priest, Pilate and Herod, the mocking and smiting soldiers, the one who offered the blessed sufferer the vinegar, and the other who thrust a spear in his side and heart, and also the two thieves on the right and left of Jesus, yea, the darkness and earthquake, the rending rocks and rent vail, the opening graves and rising dead, all were foreordained and foretold. Of all this crime of crimes, the apostle Peter by inspiration said, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel, and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Not long after Peter thus spoke, being assembled with the other apostles, "They lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Words could not be plainer, nor stronger; and these are divinely inspired words. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." Thus, did the Lord hear and bless them in this prayer. O Lord, this is enough for us to know, and here we may rest, trusting in thee.

The counsel and purpose of God so determined the fearful storm and shipwreck, in bringing all on board safely to the island of Melita,

that by his servant Paul he greatly blessed the people of the island, who not only healed their sick, but also made known to them the gospel of our Savior. So the two texts that the dear, distant brother gave me, are in unison with the divine counsel and purpose, and yet the accountability of man and secondary causes are established. All worlds and creatures are under law to the Lord God omnipotent, and all are subjected to his sovereignty, and held within the determined limit of his eternal purpose. Both the Bible and the book of nature teach and prove this. Were it not so, then we could have no assurance of anything good, but uncertainty, peril and awful destruction should run riot everywhere throughout the universe? Why this would be nothing less than to wrest the crown of dominion from the great white throne of God, and leave us as a ship turned loose to drift upon a storm-tossed sea, or it would be virtually saying, with the fool, "There is no God." When the spiritual poet, Cowper, driven by gloomy mental affliction, sought to go and drown himself, but God held him back by a singular providence, he returned home, and wrote the inspired song:

*"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.*

*Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will."*

Jehovah himself affirms this truth, saying, "I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to

Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof; that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” – {[Isa 44](#)}: This was more than a hundred years before Cyrus, the Persian king, was born. Please read on through the next chapter, in which the Lord says of Cyrus, “For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none else. “ Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.” The things here foretold, which God said he would bring to pass, involved wars, the overthrow of peoples and nations, the return of the Jews to Judea, from their seventy years’ captivity, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple, through great suffering and perils.

Yet God had purposed to bring to pass all those great and mighty events, “And it was so.”

In the histories of nations, their rise and fall, recorded in the Bible, the careful reader cannot but be impressed with the fact that the Almighty determined, directed and controlled their great battles, all of which were connected with his chosen people, either directly or indirectly. Elihu testified to Job of God and his ways and works, and of clouds and stormy winds he says, “He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. “ God thundereth marvelously with his voice; great things doeth he, which

we cannot comprehend. “ He scattereth his bright cloud. And it is turned around about by his counsels; that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy. “ With God is terrible majesty. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.” Then the Lord said to Job, “Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him! he that reproveth God, let him answer it. “ Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast – thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? “ Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee. “ Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.”

It would be well for us all to meekly receive these divine rebukes and lessons of truth, and make the contrite and submissive confession that Job did in the end of his trial. Before we presume to either criticize the Almighty, or apologize for him, as he has revealed himself in the Bible, let us remember these two positive attributes: God is holy; God is love. Then let us remember also, God is infinite, omnipotent, supreme. Remembering these, and our unholiness, ignorance, weakness and dependence, we shall be impressed with a spirit of awe and reverence before his majesty, and should shudder at the blasphemous and horrid thought of charging sin or wickedness to God, or of saying that his ways are unequal, or he is unjust. God himself says, “Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!” And his servant Paul says, “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God!” Poor, sinful, ignorant man. Yet he vaunteth himself as wiser and holier than the Holy One. How shocking for. any sinful creature, whose very breath is from the Almighty, to jeeringly talk about the holy Jehovah being the author of sin, if he would dare to comprehend all things in his eternal purpose and almighty control. Yet the very being, preservation and

salvation of those who thus rant is bound up in this dominion and supremacy of the ever blessed and holy Lord God Almighty. His word is, "Be still, and know that I am God." O, with his suffering Son, let us meekly say, "Father, thy will be done." Man's accountability is bound up in God's sovereignty.

Trusting in God omnipotent, farewell.

D. BARTLEY.

14 Salvation

Signs Of The Times
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SALVATION.

Trusting in the Spirit of truth to guide me into the truth as it is in Jesus, my heart is moved to write to the saved in Christ, of salvation. In doing so, the Bible alone must decide everything pertaining to salvation, but when this is done, then the testimony of godly and eminent writers among the saved, may be taken as confirmatory of this salvation in its power and comfort. Notwithstanding the overwhelming testimony of the holy Scriptures, that beside God there is no Savior, and that according to his mercy and by his grace he saves us, yet there has ever been a dispute in the world about salvation, and the principle and way of salvation.

So it is well that we look into this subject, both scripturally and experimentally, according to our experience of salvation. For only as we are taught the doctrine of God our Savior, and the truth of the Scriptures, in our experience of the power of salvation, have we any

true knowledge and understanding thereof. Many Bible texts affirm this. He who denies it, thereby denies revealed religion, or Christianity, and affirms the ability of man. All religious schools are based upon this denial of man's entire dependence upon God's revelation and divine power. And so it is hotly contended that man's works obtain in his salvation, more or less, as well as the divine power of God. This teaching and belief has formulated the paradoxical and contradictory creeds that salvation is both of God and of men, both unconditional and conditional, both of grace and of works. How inconsistent and strange! Two principles at war with each other, and cannot be reconciled, yet salvation depends upon both. Could anything be more absurd! One of three things is true: salvation is either of the Lord, or of man, or else it is of neither alone, but partly of both. If it is of man in part, then it is by works in part. If this is true at all, then to the extent that it is true, man is a partner with the Lord in salvation, and to that extent man is entitled to a part of the praise and glory of salvation. There is no escaping this. For if salvation is of the Lord, then the glory of salvation is his; but if any part of salvation is of works, and not by grace, then that part depends upon man, and to man justly belongs that part of the glory of salvation. But the mere statement of this doctrine exposes its falsity and condemns it. The Bible strongly condemns it. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work," is the clear cut doctrine of the Bible. So then, but two ways or principles of salvation are left for us to consider: salvation is either by grace, or of works; the grace is of God; the works are of man. The grace of God is unconditional, the works of man are conditional, and depend upon himself. When and where did anyone ever read in the Bible of conditional grace? But if salvation is conditional in part, that is, in time, then salvation in time is not by grace at all, because there is no such thing as conditional grace. No one is so foolhardy as to contend for conditional grace; therefore, none should contend that salvation in time is conditional either,

unless they also deny that time salvation is of the Lord and by grace. But whoever denies this, also arrays himself against the Bible.

The Bible doctrine is: “Salvation is of the Lord.” “By grace are ye saved: not of works, lest any man should boast.” This is present salvation, and this salvation of the Lord, and by grace, is the united teaching of the holy Bible, for it does not contradict itself. It says of Jesus, “He shall save his people from their sins.” “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Salvation from all sin, then is from sin, and Jesus thus saves. “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” This is salvation from first to last, to the uttermost need of salvation; and this is the work of Jesus, the only Savior of sinners. And since Jesus saves to the uttermost, and from all sin, which includes sins of commission and sins of omission, that is, all transgression and disobedience, the salvation is by grace from its beginning to its end; “Not of works.” This settles it as to who it is that saves any sinner from any and all sin, and as to what it is: Jesus and the grace of God. “The grace of God that bringeth salvation.” The word “bringeth” is present time; so the grace of God bringeth salvation now and always; for grace now reigns in salvation, reigns through righteousness, reigns unto eternal life, reigns by our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone saves sinners, and saves from all sin, past, present and to come. There is no other Savior of sinners, no other who can and shall save them from their sins. The Bible reveals no other. And the Bible reveals no other principle and way of salvation than the grace of God. So far from the principle of “conditions” and “works” being taught in the Bible as saving us, either in part or in whole, in time or in eternity, its strong and positive doctrine is: “Not according to our works;” “Not by works of righteousness which we have done.” And when the Bible mentions an apostle’s laborious gospel ministry and good works, even though more abundant than all the apostles, so far from the admission that all this was “conditional” on the part of Paul, and

“depended upon himself,” it directly attributes it all to the grace of God that was with Paul, and says, “not I.” Paul would sound it out loud and clear, “not of works.” Yet he commanded the children of God to be the followers of Christ and of God, as dear children, and to be careful to maintain good works, for necessary uses, and as good and profitable unto men. But so far from Paul, or the Bible, teaching that our salvation now in time being conditional upon our part, and the blessings of salvation depending upon ourselves, and being bestowed upon us as a reward of merit, or in consideration of our personal obedience and good works, the plain doctrine of the Bible is, that the grace of God that bringeth salvation and saves us, itself teaches us that we “Should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” And so then, we thus do live only because the grace that saves us thus teaches us, and our living in this godly way is clearly the effect of grace. Grace does not merely try to teach us, and then leave it to depend upon ourselves as conditional on our part, but grace really teaches us so to do. It seems very strange that those who know the grace of God in truth, do not see and know this power and sufficiency of abounding, reigning, saving, teaching grace, and attribute all the power in us that brings forth the fruits of righteousness, and the praise and glory to grace. The atonement in the blood of Christ, the anointed Redeemer, for all the sins of all his people, was the abounding grace of God, without which there could be no salvation of his people from their sins; for “Without shedding of blood is no remission,” says the Bible. Well, all the disobedience of the redeemed is sin, and all was atoned for by the suffering Redeemer, so that “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;” therefore our present salvation from every nature and kind of sin, including all our backslidings and disobedience, is by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; and when we are thus saved, it is unto obedience and good works. It is clear, then, that grace saves us from disobedience and bad works, and saves us unto obedience and good works. Therefore, as the good reason for his saying that we are saved by grace, but not of works, Paul adds: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God

hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” It is saving grace, then, that makes us new creatures in Christ; and it is because we are thus in him and he in us, that we are prepared unto good works, and we walk in them only because God before ordained or appointed that we should. The good works are of God’s appointment, and so is our walking in them. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,” is the prime and sufficient reason for the command to “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” And since God, who will do all his pleasure, works salvation in us so effectually that we are willing in the day of Christ’s power, and are strengthened with might by his Spirit, we shall surely walk in, testify of, show forth or work out our salvation. To deny this is equal to denying that God works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, or else it charges failure and disappointment to him, and that his work in us is in vain. Who will dare do this? It is true, then, that God himself is the author, the beginner and the finisher of salvation, of our own salvation, in all that salvation means and is. To him, therefore, is all the power and honor, praise and glory of salvation due, both now and forever. “For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” Who would pray that it might be different? In the prayers of even Arminian teachers, is the confession of man’s inability and dependence at all times, upon the Spirit and grace of God; and this is the daily experience of every sinner saved by grace. To his chosen and inspired apostles Jesus said, “For without me, ye can do nothing.” This was true in them in all their after experience; then it is certainly just as true in us. “My strength is made perfect in weakness,” is the testimony of Jesus. His strength is manifested in our weakness, not our strength in his weakness; for his is the strength, but the weakness is ours; ours is the sin and unrighteousness; but his is the salvation and righteousness; and there is no time in which salvation is manifested unto us in our deliverance from any danger or trouble, but that the salvation is of the Lord. Therefore, it is his favor or grace that saves us in all the way of salvation. The prophet Jonah experienced this truth when he was in

the depths of the sea, and so does everyone, when concerted from self-confidence, and taught that “the way of man is not in himself.” So also the prophet Jeremiah confessed that, “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” In this entire and continual dependence upon the Lord, is the ever present need of coming to the throne of grace. The fact that we should from necessity come to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, is itself divine testimony, not only that we are wretched and poor and needy, but also that every qualification and all strength to love and serve God, with every blessing and joy of salvation, flow down upon us from the mercy-seat and the throne of grace, and are the unbought and unmerited gifts of the God of mercy and grace. And so, then, our salvation always and at all times, is salvation by grace, for the good reason that it is of the Lord, Who hath delivered us, who doth deliver us, and in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. It is clear, then, that our salvation, whether in the past, the present, or the future, is of the Lord. “Neither is there salvation in any other.” This is the voice of God; and this settles it as to salvation now in time, and forever. It is a strange infatuation that any one, knowing the need and the divine and infinite value and blessing of salvation, should want to have it otherwise, by contending that our salvation now in time, and the blessing and joys of salvation, depend upon ourselves, and are “conditional,” depending upon our self-poised or voluntary obedience. If this is admitted, then at once self-boasting comes in and prevails. Therefore, says inspired Paul, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” And he was speaking of our present salvation, saying, “For by grace are ye saved.” The simple fact that he adds, “through faith,” confirms this; for all know that faith is a property of salvation now in the present time, and that the God of grace and salvation saves us now through faith. And Paul, speaking of justification through faith unto salvation, says, “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” This is the inevitable result of every phase of conditional salvation; for the performance of conditions are our works, and they “depend upon ourselves,” and so grace has nothing to do with us in bestowing

the blessing, but we are left to the reward of our works as a debt which we have earned, and to which we are entitled by the terms of “conditional salvation.” This is the decision of the inspired Judge in the kingdom of grace, from which there is no appeal. Those who thus deny that we are saved all the time by grace, and claim, “conditional” rewards, instead of rewards, or gifts of grace, thus doing despite to the Spirit of grace, “are fallen from grace,” and have gone back to the covenant or law of works, and can claim nothing from grace, nor consistently ask for any blessing from the God of salvation, only as they have paid him for it by their conditional salvation, which “depends upon themselves,” and their obedience and good works. It may seriously be asked, how much reward should anyone receive from the God of salvation, if the reward is thus reckoned, not of grace, but of works, as “conditional time salvation” claims! Should that man receive anything of the Lord, as the payment for his conditional works, but judgment! Will the Lord, who seeth the heart and its selfish motive, bless that one with the blessing of his grace and the joy of his salvation, seeing that such an one is claiming this very salvation conditionally, in consideration of his service? No; for grace and the God of grace are infinitely above this mean and selfish principle of serving God in order that he may reward us with his salvation, for our works. Satan taught this principle, when he promised the Son of God great rewards upon certain conditions. Again, Satan taught and said, “Doth Job fear God for naught?” He had no higher view than that this eminent servant of God feared and worshiped the Most High from no higher motive than the mercenary or selfish and base principle that he should receive blessing and honor from God as the reward of his religious life and service. This is conditionalism, pure and simple. And so the reward that the devil offered to Eve and Adam, for doing certain things as conditions, was, “Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” This was the origin of conditionalism, and from this root-principle all conditional service and works for reward have sprung; and they all alike look to self-seeking, self-happiness, and the salvation and praise of self. The

service of love and praise and glory to God is not in this principle and doctrine of conditional salvation, or salvation depending upon man; for its nature and motive and aim begin and end with self. It destroys grace, and robs God of his glory. And this is the very motive and aim of Satan in it all. All conditionalism has this feature of self-glorification in it, and appeals to the low and mean motive of serving God for reward. But the blessed God does not bestow his salvation upon us in this way; no, not now, nor ever; for one moment of his salvation experienced in the soul of the humbled sinner, is of infinite worth, and all our works are mixed with sin, and are nothing-worth in his sight. Our only true and acceptable service and worship arises from "The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." And so our service and work of love and faith is, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and ascribe to him thanksgiving, honor and glory, not in order that he may bless us with his salvation, but because he "Hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and hath given us his Spirit in our hearts to bear witness with our spirit, that he is our Father, and we are his children. This is the blessed service of love. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."

A great teacher has said, "When the supreme love once comes into the heart of man, his mind will continuously think of God and remember nothing else. " Wherever there is any seeking for something in return, there can be no real love; it becomes a mere matter of shop-keeping. As long as there is in us any idea of deriving this or that favor from God, in return for our respect and allegiance to him, so long there can be no true love growing in our hearts.

Those who worship God because they wish him to bestow favors on them, are sure not to worship him if those favors are not forthcoming." These are forcible and true words, and should sink deep in our hearts. God is the God of salvation, and Jesus is the salvation of God unto his people. "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation," said Simeon, when he held Jesus in his arms. Outside of

Jesus there is no salvation from any sin or disobedience, on earth or in heaven. No man has ever yet received this salvation conditionally, nor ever can; for Jesus is God's unspeakable gift, and with Jesus, God freely (not conditionally) gives us all things. "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness," is the word of inspiration. This leaves no spiritual blessing, nothing of all things that pertain unto life and godliness, therefore no part of salvation for us to obtain conditionally, as a reward of debt for our working for the Lord. How contemptible this!

May the Lord deliver his people from this snare of the tempter.

D. BARTLEY.

10 What The Lord Hath Spoken

Signs Of The Times
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WHAT THE LORD HATH SPOKEN. #1

Beloved Editors And Brethren: – The testimony of the holy prophets of God, whom he called and inspired, is not merely the word of men, but as really the word of the Lord, which cannot be broken. All who admit the truth of revelation must admit this. For the Lord spoke by the prophets: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” – (**Heb. 1: 2**). Therefore Jesus said, “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” This was true also of the words spoken by the prophets of God. For this cause it was usual for them to preface their messages with, “Thus saith the Lord.” This testimony of the divine prophets is therefore infallible, as were the words of the holy Son of God, who said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.” Concerning the faithful fulfillment of his word, the Lord says it is as the rain and snow, which make the earth fruitful: “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” The “shalls” of the Lord God omnipotent cannot fail, because he is the Almighty and reigneth. This must be admitted. With this established, let us now turn to the words of the “holy men of God (who) spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” which the apostle says is “a more sure word of prophecy;” more sure than even the heavenly vision of Christ’s transfiguration upon the sacred mount, which only three of his disciples were witnesses to; but the truth of the infallible prophecies all his people shall witness to.

The testimony of the prophets of the Most High related to future events. Let us keep this fact in mind; for thus we must see that they spoke by revelation, and declared the infallible word of the Lord, whose faithfulness and omnipotence would surely fulfill all that he had thus spoken. To say any prophecy or foretold event might

possibly fail to come to pass, would be a denial of God's revealed truth, as the so-called "higher critics" now deny it, and desecrating the inspired oracles of God to the mere word of man. But with the inspiration of the prophecies admitted, we then must see that the holy prophets declared the things which God had before ordained should come to pass, just as he himself had thus revealed them to his servants, whom he had called for this very purpose. Surely none will call the truth of this in question, for it is certain that future events must have been unalterably fixed or determined, either by the Lord, who revealed them to the prophets, or by some other determining power, or else they must all have failed to come to pass. To see that it must be thus, we need only consider that all things which are dependent upon the wisdom and power of men are liable to fail, and that many of the mighty and far-reaching events of prophecy were hundreds of years in the future when the prophets were moved to write them. Therefore between the time of the prophecies and the times of their fulfillment, many generations of men were born and died, and countless events and changes took place, some of them involving and affecting unborn generations, and even including the rise and fall of nations and governments on earth. All this made it absolutely necessary that all the intervening circumstances and every event between the word spoken by the prophets of God and the fulfillment thereof must not only have been certainly foreknown by the Lord God, but as well determined by him. For if one link in the chain of successive events had been broken or subject to failure, all else connected with it would likewise have been liable to fail, and the purpose and end foretold must have been defeated. Hence either God or some other shaping or determining and controlling power, a power and intelligence mightier than all intervening powers and things, did sovereignly determine the end foretold from the beginning, when the prophet wrote, "Thus saith the Lord." What power is it then that subjects and controls all events and things, great and small, so definitely that they all so certainly link together and combine in the exact accomplishment of the word spoken generations and ages before! Will the candid reader candidly

answer, as unto the Lord! If it is admitted that all prophetic events, with all things else, were infallibly seen and foreknown by the omniscient One, yet denied that they were also determined by him in his infinite wisdom and according to his eternal purpose. then will the reader please answer the question, What controlling wisdom and power does establish the unfailing certainty of all prophetic events, and all other things certainly foreknown unto the Lord! For just as the omniscience of the omnipresent God foresaw all creatures and things, so must they be, or else the foreknowledge of God is denied. There is then an absolute certainty in the exact fulfillment of all foretold events and foreknown things, although hundreds and thousands of years may intervene between the foreknowledge and its accomplishment, with millions of interposing people and events; yet all those must be subordinated to the performance of the far distant thing foreknown and foretold precisely at the time and place and in the way the prophets of the Most High declared that thus it shall be.

Now, therefore, it is absolutely certain that some superintending wisdom and controlling power does sovereignly preside over all creatures and things in all the universe, so that all do in the end result in the very things which God eternally foresaw and foreknew should come to pass, according to his infallible word by his inspired servants the prophets, to whom he revealed those far off and momentous events. The prophets spoke and wrote them with an absolute certainty, as the historian records actual history, as though the things foretold were already done. This fact is truly wonderful. Upon the certain fulfillment of the prophecies rests the authenticity of the holy Scriptures and the infallibility of the holy One, who spake by the prophets. A sacred reverence and humility becomes us, therefore, when we speak of God and his oracles. So now shall we meekly confess that the omnipotent One holds the reins of universal dominion and controls all things, to the certain accomplishment of his eternal foreknowledge of them? or will we deny him this prerogative and controlling jurisdiction, according to his infinite

wisdom and almighty power, and attribute this certain control of all things to some other being or power? For certain it is that some overruling power does control and subject all things in the universe to the accomplishment of God's absolute foreknowledge of them. Then which is wisest, safest and best, to ascribe this wisdom, dominion and controlling power to the holy God, or to wicked men and devils? But should we attribute the certainty of all things, just as God foreknew them, and as the prophets foretold many of them, to certain fixed natural forces and laws, as combining causes to produce the certain results, the question then remains to be answered, Who ordained or established and supports the fixed laws in the universe, so that they are thus unfailing in bringing to pass every foreknown event! God himself is the Lawmaker, and all his laws in his limitless dominion are ordained and maintained by his almighty power. This we must admit, or deny the God above us, and make him subject to some extraneous power and control. But his inspired prophets and apostles, who testify of him, as he revealed himself to them, ascribe to the Almighty all dominion and power, and abundantly declare that he is the omnipotent One, and all worlds, creatures and things are put under his feet, or subjected to his dominion and control. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Thus God is over all and controls all.

With these primary truths thus clearly established, we may now turn to a few of the very many solemn declarations of the Lord by his ordained prophets, by which let us be meekly instructed, while we are awed before the righteous majesty of our God: "And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." {**Hab 2:2-3**}. This is equally true of all the visions which the Lord gave to

his prophets. They are “for an appointed time, but at the end they shall speak, and not lie.” “Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed them far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.” – {[Isa 6:11-12](#)}. This was fulfilled against the people and land of Israel, by their ungodly and warring enemies, yet the Lord declared that he would remove them far away. For their sins he did it. (Let it be understood once for all, that all the righteous judgments of God upon the world are for the sins of men, justly meted out for their transgressions, in all of which God is holy, and justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, and mercy and truth go before his face.) “The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though my people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.” – {[Isa 10](#)}. (Please read the chapter.) “I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. “ Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. “ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.” – ([Isa. 13](#)). (Read this solemn chapter.) “Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. “ The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken his word.” – {[Isa 24](#)}. “Come near, ye nations, to hear; and

hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. “And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword shall be hathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.” – {[Isa 24](#)}. “Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumor, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. “Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and live thousand.” – Isaiah xxxvii. “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the First; and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people! And the things are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.” {[Isa 44](#)}. Here the Lord says that he appointed the ancient people, and the things that are coming, and shall come. All the quoted words of the Lord are plain. “I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.” {[Isa 45](#)}. “I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.” – {[Isa 48](#)}. The Lord declared this to his people Israel. How it should rebuke and humble us before him.

The prophet foretold the Lord's glorious work of salvation in his reign of righteousness and mercy among the nations, saying, "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord." – {[Isa 59](#)}. "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." – {[Isa 61](#)}. "And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth." – {[Isa 63](#)}. Thus, did the Lord speak about seven hundred years before Christ came and redeemed his people, trod down the rebellious nation of the Jews, and then the cruel Roman nation, and caused righteousness and praise to spring forth from the Gentiles. The prophets, and they that feared the Lord in Israel, and that thought upon his name, waited long, yet in the fullness of the time appointed, and just as the Most High had decreed and declared, the vision spake, and did not tarry, for the word of the Lord cannot be broken. True, unbelieving and wicked men, actuated by the flesh and the devil, combined to defeat the accomplishment of this great and glorious work and purpose of the Lord; but he had them in derision, laughed when their fear came, and mocked at their calamity. "And when ye see this, jour heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. "For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. " And they shall

declare my name among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations. “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. “And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” – {[Isa](#) 66}. These are the last words of the Lord by this great prophet. How full of majesty, glory and wonder they are! For just as the Lord hath spoken, so shall it come to pass. All worlds and beings cannot hinder it nor hasten it. This is the Lord God of the holy prophets. We may well adore this Jehovah of the Bible with humble reverence, while we take refuge under his almighty wing, for in him is everlasting strength, safety and salvation, and he is able to save us unto the uttermost.

“Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God’s behalf.” “Behold, God exalteth by his power; who teacheth like him! Who hath enjoined him his way! or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity! Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold. Every man may see it: man may behold it afar off. Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out. “Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.” This is the testimony of Elihu to Job. Of cloud and wind and storm he says, God turneth them about by his counsels, “that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy. Harken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.” Elihu thus speaks to us, too. “Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth! then shalt thou answer them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as are

for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy. And I will cause them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.” – {[Jer](#) 15}. “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye light against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them in the midst of this city. And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath. And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence.” – {[Jer](#) 21}. “Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off! Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, saith the Lord! Do not I fill heaven and earth! saith the Lord.” – {[Jer](#) 23}. “And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.” – {[Jer](#) 25}. The righteous God declared that he himself would bring those fearful but just judgments upon all those guilty nations, including his own people of Israel, who were guilty of the grossest idolatries and backslidings. Yet he would in mercy restore his people, and bring them again to Zion and bless them for his own glory.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that lime, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute

judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.” {[Jer 33](#)}. The Lord Jesus was the Branch or Son of David, and he reigns in righteousness upon his throne, doing the will of God, having obtained eternal redemption for his people, and ascended on high.

All those prophetic mighty events, involving the destinies of many peoples, and nations not a few, relating to wars and famines, plagues and pestilences, no less than the peaceful reign of Immanuel in the salvation of his redeemed among all nations, most solemnly declare that “the Lord God omnipotent reigneth “in it all, and accomplished his sovereign and righteous purpose in all those awful calamities and great national events, which his mouth foretold should so come to pass, even saying that he would bring them to pass. Because the Holy One has sovereignly thus foretold those mighty events, and fulfilled them in his judgments upon the sinful nations, shall we be so foolhardy and daring in presumption as to impiously say, If God thus purposed and determined all the atrocities and cruelties of those warring and life-destroying nations, then he himself is the author and doer of all the monstrous cruelty of those wicked nations, and is responsible for it! God forbid. Are we in God’s stead? Shall finite, sinful and ignorant creatures, whose very being and breath are dependent upon the infinite and holy and almighty Creator, rise up in judgment against him! What blind and stupid folly. Let vain man say what he will, the word of the almighty by the prophets most positively declared that thus it should be, and that he would surely execute those calamitous judgments, both upon his own people and the surrounding heathen nations. It is time to call a halt, and that men professing to be the servants of God should cease from replying against the holy Lord God Almighty, as he has declared himself by his faithful prophets. For such railing against the Lord God of the prophets, as to say that if he determined such wicked acts of men and nations, as the prophesies cited clearly show and plainly declare, makes the Holy One the author of all that sin and wickedness, and

responsible for it, is blaspheming and profaning the name of the Most High, and it betrays a shocking degree of vain arrogance and conceited presumption and bigoted ignorance, or else a sinful creature would not thus speak against the holy Creator.

(Concluded in next number.) D. BARTLEY

11 What The Lord Hath Spoken #2

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WHAT THE LORD HATH SPOKEN. #2

“Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them. Thus, saith the Lord God; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate.” – {[Eze](#) 35}. “I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses. “I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.” – {[Am](#) 4}. “For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. And the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.” – {[Am](#) 9}. “The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord had his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. “The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned

at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. “The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.” – {[Na](#) 1}. “Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One! we shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.” – {[Hab](#) 1}. “The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.” – {[Hab](#) 2}. “For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” – {[Mal](#) 4}. Just as the Lord thus declared that it should come to pass, both as to the wicked, and they that fear his name, so it was, and so it shall be.

Coming to the New Testament, the holy Son of God said, “And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” – Matt. xxiv. Paul also foretold what should be, saying, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” – {[Ac](#) 20}. He again prophesied, to the brethren and said, “That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.” – {[1Th](#) 3}. “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith,

giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.” – {[1Ti](#) 4}. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” – {[2Ti](#) 4}. Peter likewise prophesied, saying, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” – {[2Pe](#) 2}. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” – {[2Pe](#) 3}. “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ,” said, “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. “But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.”

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him,” will worthily conclude these very solemn and wonderful prophetic revelations from God. Of the two witnesses the angel said, ‘And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.’ (xi.) Of the beast John says, “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written, in the book of life of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let

him hear.” (xiii.) “Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.” (xvi.) Concerning the judgment of God against Babylon, John heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.” (xviii.) “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the Faints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (xx.) The beloved John was then shown “a new heaven and a new earth,” and he “saw the holy city, new Jerusalem. “ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; 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. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.” (xxi.) “And they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.” (xxii.)

“What shall we I then say to these things?” For all the prophetic words and sayings, truly;” given in this article, are alike faithful and

true, the righteous judgments of God, no less than his gracious blessings, all of which were spoken with a divine positiveness, as the revealed word of God, showing that all those great and marvelous things “must” and “shall” come to pass, because God, “who cannot lie,” hath spoken all those words. For if one word of all the revelation which the Lord declared by his prophets could be defeated and fail, it would impeach all his testimony. But, blessed be his holy name, this can never be; for his word is as eternal as his holy throne, and all things which his word has spoken must take place. “The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.” – {[Isa](#) 14:24}.

Surely it cannot be thought by us that the prophetic words of the Lord were either distinct from or opposed to his thought and purpose, for this would involve a conflict between the thought of the Lord and his prophetic word, which he inspired his prophets to write. It is infallibly certain, therefore, that all the word of the Lord by his prophets is supported by his solemn oath, that it shall thus come to pass and stand, as he hath thought and purposed and revealed. And this establishes the certain fulfillment of all the things which holy men of old, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, have foretold in the Bible, as unfailingly as could the decree of the Almighty, who changes not. Every fair and candid mind will see and admit this. Let the dear reader search the prophetic Scriptures, and it will amaze and awe you to find that prophecy embraced all history, including the rise and fall of nations, their wars and awful calamities, famines and plagues, as the fearful visitations of God’s righteous judgments, and that the history of the Hebrew people, and the many surrounding wicked nations, which is largely a history of wars and calamities the most appalling – that history is prophecy fulfilled.

Now, therefore, the holy Lord God Almighty, who declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things which were

not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure, who is in one mind, and none can turn him, certainly had a wise and holy purpose in the accomplishment of all those mighty events of peoples and nations, events both of judgment and mercy, which he called and moved the holy men of old to write, from his servant Moses to his Son Jesus. The infinite wisdom and omnipotent power and perfect holiness and rich mercy of our majestic and ever blessed God, are proclaimed and made known thus to the children of men. Shall we say, “Even so, Lord God Almighty!”

Yours to serve,

D. BARTLEY.

Crawfordsville, Ind.

16 Review Of Fulton Convention Work

REVIEW OF FULTON CONVENTION WORK.

After a close and careful comparison of the entire work of the Fulton “National Convention” with the text of the London Confession, as published in a booklet by the Elders Kirkland, in the spirit of godly sincerity and charity I wish to review it impartially with peace and goodwill to all lovers of truth.

As to authority: the confession was the work of “the ministers and messengers of upwards of one hundred baptized congregations,” and so it has the sanction and authority of all those churches of the saints. But the work of the Fulton meeting has no other authority than as thus expressed: “By request of the Fulton church, we met on November 11, 1000.” Hence, outside of the Fulton church, not one of those engaged in that work was an authorized messenger of his

home church, but all were mere volunteers, having no authority whatever to represent and act for the general body of Old Baptist churches; therefore their work is entitled to no higher regard than their personal opinions as individuals, representing themselves only. How vast the difference! Thus it is an evident and potent fact, that the great brotherhood of Old Baptist churches of the United States neither felt the need of nor called for a “National Convention,” either to settle the orthodoxy of the old confession, or any other question touching faith and practice. So, the Fulton meeting was a very load one indeed, instead of a “National Convention;” for the self-appointed persons who ran to Fulton without being sent, as did Ahimaaz, a good man, went from only ten of the nearly fifty States and Territories. Nor is this all, for so far from having the sanction and sympathy and prayers of the thousands of gospel churches and ministers of this vast Commonwealth to support them, it was the very opposite of this, for the general sentiment and feeling was against such a convention, and all concerned knew this. And well knowing this fact, it must have been apparent to all that such a mere local, voluntary and partial convention of Baptists could not promote the fellowship and unity of the general brotherhood of saints in Christ Jesus. What this local meeting did at Fulton, as published by those who called the meeting, is in sad evidence that they failed to restore the former peace which their new issues had disturbed. They could not have expected to restore that which they had taken, away. What, then, was the purpose of the convention! The answer is found in the published work of the Fulton meeting, as set forth in the general address, foot-notes, and appendix, to which special attention is kindly solicited. The main thing to be considered is, what the convention adopted upon the issues which had caused the “no small dissension and disputation” among the churches, where peace had prevailed before such issues were raised. Did they seek to heal the breaches in Zion, by pouring oil on the troubled waters, and extending the olive branch of peace! In sadness we fail to any effort in this way as peacemakers. So far from it, the one principal purpose and work of that convention was but a reaffirming

and trying to thus sanction those confusing and disturbing new issues, as things to be saddled upon the Old Baptist people as doctrines which they must receive and fellowship, or else they must be declared out of fellowship by the edicts of that convention, as declared in the general address, section two, page nine. In this item it is said, “We beseech all our churches and people that they raise no bars of fellowship against any Primitive Baptist with whom they are agreed on fundamental principles – such as the eternal salvation of sinners, wholly by grace and entirely unconditional on the sinner’s part, and who are sound and orderly in the ordinances of the church.” It was well known by those brethren that this statement does not touch the disturbing doctrine at issue, which doctrine they elsewhere adopt as that which must be received as sound doctrine. The churches that will not so fellowship the new doctrine are declared against on page nine, saying, “the only course for those who want to remain in this holy church union is to discard their actions and have no connection with them, until they withdraw such bars of fellowship.” Bars of fellowship against what doctrine? The foot-notes and the appendix show that the bars of fellowship spoken of were the result of the new issues raised among the Baptists, and that those disturbing doctrines were conditional salvation in time, as distinct from unconditional eternal salvation by grace, and the partial or limited sovereignty or predestination or decree of God.

So now, let us kindly consider this question of disturbance and compare the points at issue with the London Confession, which all claim to accept upon those points of difference. But why, then, the need or utility of the Fulton Convention? Why the address, the foot-notes and the appendix added to the good old Confession, which had been good enough for the Old Baptist people through the centuries, until this late upheaval? The plea for all this additional supplementary work of the recent convention has been stated in print frequently, and is thus given in the general address: “Language through the lapse of many years undergoes variations in applications and meanings, whereby certain classes become more or less obscure

in meaning. Wherever, in the opinion of this assembly, the meaning of a section was not apparent, foot-notes were added to bring out the meaning.” But if such a change of meaning and obscurity of language is true of one section of the old Confession, it is also true of every section, and just as true of the whole Bible, which is older than the London Confession. In all candor, then, why were the foot-notes confined to a few sections, and these the very places which treat of the doctrines involved in this new issue! This is very strange indeed, if the old Confession has really become doubtful and dark in meaning because of its age! If this is a valid cause for calling a convention of Baptists, why not bring out in easy and plain words the meaning of the entire Confession, so that all the Baptists may now understand and unite upon its meaning? Then, if the plea is a real and valid one, why not also get up a Baptist Convention to “bring out the more or less obscure meaning “of the ancient Bible! But who were the leading and active workers in the work of the Fulton Convention! With all courtesy to them, were they eminent for great learning and wisdom! And as such, were they chosen and sent to Fulton by the Old Baptist people at large! “Why would they, then, take it upon themselves to put their own meaning or construction upon some of the chief doctrinal sections of the old Confession, and decree that those who want to remain in their union shall have no connection with other brethren and churches who cannot conscientiously fall in line with the new issues and decrees or work of the Fulton Convention! Brethren who deplore bars of fellowship being set up, do certainly err and far exceed their authority and right, in thus clothing this Fulton Convention with ecclesiastic authority to decide the terms of fellowship for all the Old Baptist family, then cast out all of them who cannot indorse their work, and say to all who will do so, “The only course for those who want to remain in this holy church union is, to discard their actions and have no connection with them.” This is in itself a sweeping and world-wide bar of fellowship, and it is both arbitrary and without charity. For it is binding a yoke upon the consciences of thousands of the loving disciples of Christ, humble, loving and

God-fearing men and women, who devoutly believe that all their salvation is by God's abounding grace in Christ Jesus, vouchsafed to them as ever sinful and unworthy in time; and who cannot believe otherwise than as simply stated in the London Confession upon "God's decree," which they accept in all its parts, without any words to explain it away. And upon these two things the issue is made, with all the resulting confusion and marring of fellowship.

The old Confession says, "God hath decreed in himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established, in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree." This is as guarded as words can make a statement, yet most clear and plain. In this sublime belief in the dominion and sovereignty of God his servants and children have stood united from of old, and will yet ever so stand as the loyal and prevailing brotherhood in Christ, though ever reproached for it.

But the Fulton convention said, "We do not believe that God unconditionally, unlimitedly and equally predestinated righteousness and unrighteousness. It is our belief that God has positively and effectually predestinated the eternal salvation of his people, which were chosen in Christ before time." This statement as a whole plainly denies the above statement of the Confession, and admits only that God predestinated or decreed the eternal salvation of his people, and to this it limits God's decree of predestination. The long foot-note on page 36 is a similar statement, and not in accord with the Confession on God's decree, to which there is no limit, but it includes the words "freely and unchangeably all things whatsoever come to pass." The contradiction here is irreconcilable, and one or the other is erroneous. But when the convention says, "A

failure to make this distinction [‘between God’s attitude to sin and his attitude and relation to holiness’] has been a fruitful source of division and distress of our holy cause, and a failure to so distinguish between God’s permissive and overruling decree of sin and his causative decree of holiness will ever cause distress and confusion among our people.” Again, page 99: “God’s purpose concerning sin does not sustain the same relation to sin that it does to holiness. While we think that God’s purpose concerning sin is more than barely permissive, it is such as to exclude all chance and uncertainty, yet we hold that God is in no sense the cause of sin.” Again, page 100: “We insist that we should not use language implying that God’s attitude to sin is the same as his attitude to holiness, for this tends to destroy the distinction between right and wrong. The expression, ‘unlimited predestination of all things,’ seems to convey the idea that God’s purpose concerning sin is as unlimited and unrestricted as it is concerning holiness; and if so, then God’s decree concerning sin would be causative, since it is causative concerning holiness, and this view would destroy all distinction between right and wrong.” Now, sadly let me say, these statements and seeming inferences are unwarranted, uncharitable and prejudicial, calculated to mislead all who accept them as facts, for they assume that the Baptists who believe just what the old Confession most plainly and positively declares of God’s decree, (his unlimited predestination of all things) make no distinction between sin and holiness, but hold that God sustains the same relation and attitude to sin that he does to holiness, and that his relation to both is causative; that is, that “God is the author of sin,” if it be true that he decreed all things whatsoever come to pass. No Baptist so believes. No Baptist writer has ever written that God’s decree of all things makes no distinction between sin and holiness, but is alike the cause of all sin as well as holiness. This imputation is most hurtful and lamentable, because it is neither just nor true, but a very prejudicial inference, and a violation of Christian charity and brotherly kindness. For all Predestinarian Baptists have ever held on this point of doctrine, as did those ancient brethren of England and Wales, that, “yet so as thereby is God

neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein.” Therefore, in raising this mistaken cry of alarm against the unlimited decree of God, and charging that it makes all wickedness and sin the result of his decree, and destroys the distinction between right and wrong, the brethren of the Fulton Convention have grievously put a stumbling-block in the way of unity, fellowship and peace.

That convention likewise recognized and labored to establish another new issue in doctrine, which has caused much confusion and distress, where harmony and peace prevailed before it was foisted or sprung upon the Baptists of the Old School, but a few years ago. This new doctrine is called, “Conditional Salvation in Time.” And this has been the chief disturbing doctrine in the “no small dissension and disputation” which it has caused among the Baptist people. Knowing this as they did, it is sadly strange that the Fulton Convention of Baptists adopted it as an article of their faith, and required all other Baptists, who want to remain in their union, or who may want to come into it, to accept it. Lamentably strange this is, after saying in the preface to their work as a convention, “With an earnest desire to see union and harmony prevail among us everywhere,” &c. Again: “The Importance of Fellowship cannot be overestimated. “ Bars of Fellowship set up by our local churches have been the most destructive influences against the growth and progress of the church. Traditions of men and human customs, being regarded as authority, have often given rise to bars of fellowship and resulted in the destruction of the peace of the churches.” This statement will as well apply to the Fulton Convention and its work, and contains its own sentence. For here it was not even local churches making tests and setting up terms of fellowship for the Baptists at large, but only a few unauthorized brethren as individuals. Yet those brethren, when they speak of the good old doctrine of unconditional salvation of sinners being wholly by grace, they must qualify grace by saying, “Eternal Salvation,” as much as to say our salvation in time is not by grace, but of works, and is conditional upon our part. They therefore say, page 101: “We

believe the Scriptures teach that there is a time salvation received by the heirs of God distinct from eternal salvation, which does depend upon their obedience. The people of God receive their rewards for obedience in this life only.” Again, page 102-3: “We hold that God’s government of his people is moral. We hold, too, that conditionality is an essential element of moral government.” And again, page 104: “We understand it to mean that men are capable of choosing things in harmony with their nature – things most agreeable to them. They are and must be capable of voluntary action, in order to their being accountable. Liberty of will in this sense is essential to moral government, as we believe.”

Now, kindly, sincerely and faithfully do I protest that this distinction in the salvation of sinners, as both of grace and works, unconditional in part and conditional in part, is a seriously confusing and disturbing element and doctrine; a distinction and division in our salvation not made in the Bible, nor in the London Confession, nor by our faithful fathers in the gospel of the grace of God; for all these ever use the singular noun, “salvation,” and never the plural, salvations; and they all attribute our entire salvation from all sin to God and Christ and grace. This gospel of full and complete salvation by grace, “not of works,” the Old Baptist people have ever cherished in their hearts as divinely true and sacred; and the remnant according to the election of grace will ever do so until time shall be no longer. And in blest eternity “the general assembly and church of the Firstborn “shall ever happily be “to the praise of the glory of his grace.”

Until very modernly, the principle and doctrine of conditions in salvation had no place or influence among the Old Baptists, but it prevailed among the Arminian orders, and many thousands of the children of God among them have been brought into bondage by it. It is also true of the other new and kindred issue, the mistaken and uncharitable outcry against the Predestinarian Baptists, that their doctrine makes God the author of all things whatsoever come to pass

which he decreed from all eternity, as affirms the old Confession, that this charge was made only by the Arminian conditionalists until very modernly.

It should not be wondered at, therefore, that the introduction and pressure of these new issues among the Old Baptists met with opposition from many of them, whose hearts are established in the sacred belief of salvation by grace only, and in the unlimited sovereignty of God, just as declared in the London Confession; for the inevitable consequence of this innovation upon the gospel of the grace of God, by the new gospel (?) of conditional salvation in time, and of this recent war against God's decree of all things, as held through the ages past, and solemnly set forth in the good old Confession, was confusion and division among the local churches, where these new issues sprung up and were urged. It was this opposition to sovereignty and grace that led to the disturbance and, in some local churches, the breaking of fellowship, all of which is lamentable and gives us all sorrow. The responsibility rests upon the new doctrines.

It was quite natural for the leading promoters of these new and disturbing elements and issues of limited decrees and limited grace, or part grace in salvation, to feel zealous for their greatest success, and so seek to draw all the Baptists with them as far as possible. And it was this fact that led them to make effort after effort to call a Baptist convention, in which they finally succeeded. What was its aim and scope! The work of the convention, as published by them, shows that their sole object was to have the disturbing doctrines engrafted upon the Baptist articles of faith, in which they succeeded so far as the Fulton Convention could give sanction and prestige to them. Therefore, so far from it being a "National Convention" of the Old Baptists, as claimed, it was so exclusive or partial and local that none others only those who would sympathize and come in line with them in their innovations upon the old and sacred doctrine of God's sovereignty in his decree and grace was wanted or could have been

an active member in that convention. For it was understood that all who could be welcomed there must fall in line. So all did who attended as volunteer messengers to that Fulton meeting. The leading spirits in the new movement virtually proclaimed abroad: We are in trouble; for we have enlisted in a war against the old doctrine of salvation only by grace, and God's unlimited decree, and unfortunately we are meeting with strong opposition from many good brethren who will not fall in with our improved and less objectionable doctrines, which, if generally accepted, will greatly elevate and enlarge the Primitive Baptist churches, so that they will become far more influential and popular than they have been. Now, therefore, come to Fulton and join with us in a "National Convention," which we intend shall eclipse the old London meeting, and help us to fix up this trouble and settle this controversy, in such a way that conditional salvation in time and limited predestination or decrees shall be made to harmonize with the long accepted London Confession of Faith and added to it as supplementary articles of the Baptist faith. This was done. Now the work of the Fulton convention is incorporated in a book with the time-honored London Confession, as a very important addition to it, explaining it and giving it prestige. And all the Old Baptists who accept the old are likewise expected and required to accept the new, or they shall be discarded as not "in this holy church union," which, it is boastingly claimed, includes perhaps nine-tenths of all the Primitive Baptists. Now, permit me to sorrowfully and lovingly say, How very lamentable that all this has been done! For so far from taking up the stumbling-blocks out of the way of the Lord's afflicted and poor people, in a work of peace, the effort has been thus made to divide them upon the line of eternal salvation only by grace, but salvation in time, of works, and limited predestination to holiness only. This gratified the few leaders in this new movement, who are pleased with their seeming success; but it is really lamentable for themselves in the end, no less than for the general peace and spiritual health and welfare of the dear Old Baptist brotherhood, who are thus unhappily

made to suffer from those disturbing innovations upon the doctrine of God our Savior.

In conclusion, there is one alleviating and consoling fact in all this new and strange movement among Baptists; that is, the so-called “National Convention” was nothing more than a voluntary individual meeting, without any authority or jurisdiction whatever to decide upon any point of doctrine or fellowship, so none of the churches of the saints are bound by it; and the good old doctrine of the London Confession relative to the unlimited decree and universal providence of God and salvation by his sovereign grace only, remains unshaken, true and sacred as before, not in the least curtailed, modified or “explained away.” And this doctrine of our forefathers and of the apostles of the Lord will stand immovable as a bulwark of God’s eternal truth long after this new movement against it shall have passed away, and the people “saved by the Lord” shall on and on down through the coming ages, till the Lord shall come and bring all his saints with him, ever abide steadfastly in the unlimited sovereignty of God and the gospel of salvation by his grace.

*“Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days:
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.”*

This is submitted in brotherly kindness to all who in heart believe in Jesus as the salvation of God, as did Simeon, and for them I have fellowship and love, though they may be “entangled with the yoke of bondage,” as the Galatian brethren were, through conditional teaching. For no heart felt believer in Christ, the Redeemer and Savior of sinners, of whom the word says, “Neither is there salvation in any other,” do I declare non-fellowship, but it afflicts me to know that any of the dear redeemed people of the Lord, who is all their salvation, deny the sufficiency of his grace to save them in time, but

they must fall back upon conditional works of their own now in time, yet admitting that their eternal salvation is unconditional and by sovereign grace alone. To me this is a strange paradox, an irreconcilable inconsistency and contradiction; for since grace alone has power to save with everlasting salvation from sin, and all sin, it alone has power to save from sin in time, from any and every sin, whether of commission or omission. For certainly since grace is sufficient unto the greater salvation, it is no less sufficient unto the lesser salvation. But none will presume to say that the salvation by grace is conditional, for grace has no conditions in it, but it reigns in salvation as the princess of heaven. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," says the word. And this is salvation by mercy and grace in time, and in every time of need.

O that we all, who daily need the grace of God, could thus humbly and contritely come unto the throne of grace, and be filled with grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace; for then there would be no controversy or contention about our daily salvation not being by grace, but of works and conditional on our part.

*"Savior, visit thy plantation,
Grant us, Lord, a gracious rain!
All will come to desolation,
Unless thou return again:
Lord revive us,
All our help must come from thee!"*

DAVID BARTLEY.

17 Providence And Grace #1

the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the

inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou!" Let us read Elihu's answer to. Job, and be instructed. "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." All this divine truth shows the greatness and majesty, power and wisdom and glory of the God of providence, as the supreme Ruler of all worlds and creatures and things. It denies and excludes chance from the universe, and proves the universal control and dominion of the Almighty. With God there is neither accident nor chance. To say there is, denies his infinite foreknowledge and universal providence, and therefore limits him in both his wisdom and dominion. If chance obtains, providence ceases; both cannot exist. The primary definition of the noun providence in the Standard Dictionary is: "The care, control and guidance exercised by the supreme Being over the universe in all its parts and contents. In its widest sense providence includes (1) foreknowledge, (2) foreordination, and (3) efficacious administration, including preservation and continued government, the last element being all that in ordinary usage is thought of, as, 'God's providence in mine inheritance.' Providence literally means foresight, and then a careful arrangement prepared beforehand for the accomplishment of predetermined ends." In proof of this the Bible says, "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited; I am the Lord, and there is none else." "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I

will do all my pleasure.” This positively affirms the universal dominion of God’s providence, and shows that not anything can ever arise by blind chance, or exist beyond or outside of his unbounded providence.

In his Church History, pages (552-3), Elder Hassell says, “As for anything occurring ‘by chance,’ or without a cause, no human being can possibly believe such a thing, even if his very life depended upon it; for the human mind is so constituted by the Creator as to necessarily believe that every event has a cause; and the use of the expression by chance,’ simply means that the cause is unknown to the speaker or writer, and not at all that there is no cause. The belief in universal causation is a primitive and fundamental intuition of the human mind. All secondary causes point the thoughtful mind inevitably to the Great First Cause, Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent, and to his eternal, sovereign will, either efficient or permissive, in accordance with which all events occur.” He then quotes from Elder J. K. Respass, who said, “There is one thing we all know, and that is, that nothing has happened or can happen by chance, and that smacks so much of decree that it shuts my mouth.” On page 655 he quotes from Elder W. M. Mitchell, who said, “Predestination enters into every rational act of every intelligent creature, and puts them to work to carry out their predestinating plans, and it enters into every act of God, the great Fountain of intelligence. It’s works in nature, providence and grace, are but the development and manifestation of his predestination.” On page 652 are these true remarks: “Much of the language of the inspired writers was designed to comfort and sustain the spirit of God’s people in the midst of the greatest trials, by teaching them that all events are perfectly foreseen by God, and, in a sense, predetermined by him, and will be overruled for good to his afflicted ones. His absolute and universal dominion was constantly present to the minds of the children of God in ancient days. Its effect upon the mind was solemn and impressive, and never suggested the faintest presumption of injustice in God, even when the acts that were sinful in his creatures

were traced in another sense to his holy and awful will. The Scripture, accordingly, never hesitates for a moment to ascribe absolute holiness to God, and all the guilt of every sinful act to the sinner.” And just as much is the same truth of the Scriptures “designed to comfort and sustain the spirit of God’s people in the midst of the greatest trials “now, as well as then, and they still need the same “strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” On page 651, Elder Hassell well says, “While God does not incite sinful thoughts in any heart, he is perfectly able to bend and control every sin to the furtherance of his own glory and his people’s good. His knowledge and purpose and power include all events, so that his children may, in one sense, see him in all things, and rejoice that he will make all things work together for their good.” This assurance is certainly a great stay and comfort to me now in the present trial of faith. The poets wrote truly when they declared that,

*“God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.*

*His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.”*

*“Great God of Providence! thy ways
Are hid from mortal sight;
Wrapt in impenetrable shades,
Or cloth’d with dazzling light.”*

God is revealed and known in his grace, and his power and glory declared, even more majestically and blessedly than in his all-wise and almighty providence. For in the manifestation of his sovereign

grace, God is shown to be “rich in mercy,” no less than omnipotent in power. The grace and mercy of God, who is blessed for evermore, make known his infinite goodness. His inspired oracles abundantly testify that “The Lord is good.” They also reveal that he is not only the “God of love and peace,” and that his love is great and everlasting, but that “God is love.” The love of God is perfect, then, and this his essence or nature is perfect or infinite holiness. So inherent and immaculate is the holiness of God that he is not only the “holy One,” the “most holy,” but “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” It is most irreverent and awful, then, when any unholy creature will presumptuously speak of the holy Lord God Almighty as “the author of sin” in any case, or if his controlling purpose and determinate counsel extends to and includes all events. The sinful man who thus presumes, thereby assumes to be more wise and more holy than “the only wise God,” who is immutably holy. God will maintain his own glorious holiness, and he needs no self-wise, sinful creature to sit in judgment against the conduct of his Maker, or lay down a line by which Jehovah should be governed in his providence and grace, neither does he need the apologies of vain and foolish man. His sentence is, “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God!” “Let God be true, but every man a liar.” “Be still, and know that I am God.”

(Concluded in next number.) D. BARTLEY

18 Providence and Grace #2

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PROVIDENCE AND GRACE. #2

The holy oracles connect grace with God, and call him “The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” Peter then says, “I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.” Paul calls it, “The grace of God that bringeth salvation.” Salvation embraces lost sinners, and they are saved from their sins. The angel said of Jesus, “he shall save his people from their sins.” This is absolute: “He shall save.” In what way? “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Grace is united to the reigning Christ, then, and he to the God of grace and providence. This is the glory of grace, therefore, and thus it is saving grace, and glorious grace, for the God of salvation and glory is its Author and Source, and by his all-conquering and righteous Son grace reigns. So there is neither weakness nor failure in the grace of God. “By grace are ye saved.”

Having seen that this royal princess that reigns unto eternal life is the free gift of the Holy God, unmerited and unbought, and that the King who reigns in righteousness supports grace by his victory over sin and death and the devil, and by his power over all flesh, we may join with Paul in his full ‘assurance of faith and say, “For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” And so not only does grace reign through righteousness unto and over all her favored subjects, but they shall also through the abundance of grace and righteousness reign in life eternal, by her and their Lord of glory. For although sin abounded in and over the people of grace, even unto death, and this monster had shut them up in his boasting prison-house, yet so invincible and mighty is grace that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Yea, so much more that grace saves her people from sin and death and the grave, unto righteousness and life and immortality. This is grace, and this her power and success and glory.

Grace, then, is synonymous with salvation and holiness and eternal life. Yea, grace is in everlasting union with God and Jesus and heaven. We do not wonder, therefore, that the inspired ministers of grace uniformly addressed their brethren in grace with the benediction: "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Neither do we feel any amazement that the victorious Christ, by whom grace reigns, assured and comforted his persecuted and buffeted servant with, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Nor are we surprised that Paul, who, as a faithful servant of Christ, said, "By the grace of God I am what I am," when writing to all the saints and faithful in Christ, and speaking of the holy purpose of God, in the blessing and choice and predestination of his people, "according to the good pleasure of his will," should proclaim that all this salvation unto holiness is that the saved should be "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." That we should be thus in all the way of salvation, from its beginning in us to its consummation in eternal glory. Hence, says Paul, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Then it shall be perfectly performed, and the saved by grace shall "be holy and without blame before God in love." In all this good work and way of full salvation much more abounding grace reigns, and reigns through righteousness. This is ordered and sure, for the Lord hath spoken it. This is our great need, but more we do not need, and cannot receive. All the divine record concerning the salvation of sinners is summed up, therefore, in the one confession, "Salvation is of the Lord." And the way of it is, "The grace of God bringeth salvation." "For by grace are ye saved." This salvation is being manifested now, here in time, and it is the Lord's begun good work in us, by his much more abounding and reigning grace, but its fullness shall be on heaven's side of the grave, when all the saved by grace shall joyfully say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "And he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it." "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."

Now, forasmuch as the God of reigning grace supremely rules in providence, so that all worlds are subject to his almighty power and control, his providence and his grace are harmonious and concurrent in the accomplishment of his counsel, “according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.” Therefore to his people he says, “Fear not; for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; oven every one that is called by ray name; for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. “ Thus saith the Lord, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters; which bringeth forth the chariot and the horse, the army and the power; They shall lie down together, they shall not rise; they are extinct, they are quenched as tow. “ I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honor me, and dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.” Thus does the Lord declare his wondrous providence in ruling the nations, his power over the whole earth, and the conquests of his irresistible grace, in gathering together his people in Christ, and saving them out of all countries. “Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel

of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof.” Providence supreme controlled in all those wonderful and mighty events; and so it does in God’s limitless universe; and parallel with his providence runs the mercy of God to all the ends of the earth, so that his providence is made subservient to his grace in all times and places, and unto all the peoples of the earth, whom he hath from the beginning chosen unto salvation. So the Lord’s arm of supreme power rules for him in providence, as in grace. Knowing this, Paul wrote these wonderful words of faith: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” He knew this by revelation of the truth in the oracles of God, “who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,” and who “doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.” So true is this, the Son of God said of the little birds of the air, “Not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father.” This is the providence of God. Providence is universal then, and there is nothing outside of it, for God is omnipresent, is everywhere, and he is the God of providence in all places. Providence does not oppose grace, therefore, but goes hand in hand with it, and both grace and providence work together in the salvation of his people and for their good. If it were not so, then many things in providence, or rather beyond the control of providence, might perchance arise to hinder or obstruct or defeat the purpose of God in his grace, so that there might be disappointment or frustration or woeful failure in the reign of grace, and in the counsel and purpose and will and wish of the God of grace and salvation. But we rejoice that there is no such thing as frustration or defeat or want with the God of providence and grace, who speaks, and it is done, commands, and it stands fast, and who says, “I will do all my pleasure.”

In the manifestation and application of God’s providence in grace, and grace in providence, many instructive and remarkable instances

are given in the Bible, a few of which let us notice. First, follow Abraham and his sons Isaac and Jacob and his family, in all their history, from Ur to Canaan, from Canaan to Egypt, and from Egypt up into Canaan again. Note all the mighty events in all this history, the righteous judgments of God upon the Egyptians, the nations of the wilderness, and the seven nations of Canaan; the consequent calamitous wars, until the youthful David, “a man after God’s own heart,” reigned upon the throne of Israel; then behold the wonderful wisdom and power, mercy and grace and love of God through it all, to the people whom he had formed for himself, that they should show forth his praise and glorify the God of their salvation, and with silent awe we must say, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.” Next, single out the persecuted little Joseph, the loved of his father, and trace him from his father’s bosom, on and on, till the son again wept in the father’s arms down in Egypt; then recount all the overflowing goodness and surpassing compassion of God as the outcome of all the long trial and afflictions of blessed Joseph, and, with David, we shall feelingly say, “The wrath of man shall praise thee, O Lord; and the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain.” Again, from the son Joseph follow on to the Son Jesus, who was born in the city of David, where Jacob buried Rachel, the beloved mother of Prince Joseph, near where a multitude of the heavenly host sang praises to God, saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men;” and consider all the intervening providence of God in his dealings with the Hebrew nation and the nations about them, from Joseph to Jesus, and from the birth of Jesus to his death on the cross, and from his resurrection to his ascension from Olivet to the right hand of his Father in glory; mark the mighty events which were inseparably connected in the providence of God through many centuries with all this most glorious redemption and salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, then you will not say that the grace of God that bringeth salvation is not interwoven with his providence, neither that the providence of God does not embrace and control all events in the universe. You will not unless you

dispute the Bible history, and object to the boundless dominion of the supreme Being, “who is God over all and blessed for evermore.”

The people of God’s grace are everywhere, in all nations, tongues, peoples, kindreds and families; for he said to Abraham that in him and his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed, therefore some of the Lord’s people are either directly or indirectly connected with all the events of time, and affected by all that transpires in the world; but wherever they are, there God is, and his hand of providence is over them. “For in him we live, and move, and have our being,” and his chosen are kept by his power. Behold the uniting lines of providence and grace in the Lord sending Jonah to Nineveh, and sparing that great city; also, in the sifting and conversion of Peter; also, in the Lord sending him to the house of the Gentile Cornelius; also, in his sending Philip away to the south, just at the moment to meet the returning Ethiopian, to whom he preached Jesus. For the Lord had said that Ethiopia also should stretch out her hands to him. The history of God’s people in the Bible abounds with such memorial cases, plainly showing the shaping and controlling of their lives by many combining events in his wonderful providence, which providential links unite with his grace in its glorious reign in their salvation, and in forming his people for his praise. Thus the Lord’s dominion and power is manifest in both his providence and grace in his glorious work of their salvation.

Turn now to your own lives, dear brethren, and you can but set up all along the way, here and there, an Ebenezer of praise to the God of your being, because his mercy and grace have been so richly bestowed upon you in his guiding and protecting providence through which he has held you up in your pilgrimage, so that you have not perished in your afflictions, but his mercy has held you up and his grace has been sufficient for you. “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.” O why should we want to limit the holy and blessed God, or deny his dominion and omnipotent control and infinitely wise purpose, either

in his limitless providence or reigning grace? Do we fear that he will blunder and make mistakes if we ascribe to him universal and absolute sovereignty? Are we wiser and holier than the Holy Father Almighty? Reverend and holy is his name. Let us reverence and adore him.

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19 Predestination

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PREDESTINATION.

Beloved Brethren: – Predestination is a prerogative of all intelligent beings, and God possesses it pre-eminently and infinitely, because he is infinite in all his perfections or attributes, while all others are finite and limited. But the Almighty is unlimited. These are primary and self-evident truths. It would be impious folly in a creature to try to limit the infinite Creator. Speak we of knowledge, wisdom, counsel, purpose, power, truth, holiness, goodness – God is infinite in all these, as in all else. “God is in one mind, and none can turn him.” “I am the Lord, I change not.” Immutability belongs to Jehovah only. This places him above and independent of all outside and creature influence and control. God knows no will except his own. The universal prayer is, “Thy will be done.” His will is eternal. Eternity is his. Every event of all time and of infinite eternity as well, is forever present with him, for he is omniscient and omnipresent; that is, everywhere and always present in all eternity and time,

“beholding the evil and the good.” No creature or thing or event has ever been concealed in the least from the Omniscient Eyes. These are some of the perfections of the Lord God Almighty. To deny them is to deny that he is God, and to limit the Almighty. Atheists do this; God forbid that we should. To us he says, “Be still, and know that I am God.”

Never having written specially on the predestination of God, now I am moved to do so, in humility and reverence, fear and trembling, desiring only his honor and glory, and that his people may love and worship him.

The accurate Standard Dictionary gives these definitions: Foreknowledge. – The prescience of God, by which he foresees from all eternity every being that will exist and every event in his history, as well as all other events whatsoever. Counsel. – Purpose as the result of careful consideration; design; as, God’s counsel. Purpose. – Plan; design; aim; as, the eternal purpose of God. Decree. – The eternal purpose of God, whereby for his own glory he has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; also, any specific purpose embraced in this one. Foreordain. – To ordain or appoint beforehand; predetermine; predestinate. Predestination. – The counsel of God concerning fallen men; the ordering of all things beforehand by the Creator; the eternal purpose of God.

All these defined words are Bible terms, and they are thus defined as God has revealed himself in his oracles. The definitions show that all these words of Scripture are very closely related in their meaning, so that the definition of one pervades the definition of each of the others, making the foreknowledge, counsel, purpose, decree, foreordination and predestination of God harmonious and inseparable, just as are all his attributes in all his works and ways. The counsel and purpose of the Lord run parallel with his prescience or foreknowledge, and all these are surely held firmly in his almighty decree or foreordination or predetermination or control,

thereby forever excluding chance from the limitless dominion of God, and subjecting all creatures, things and events to his omnipotence or power, according to his eternal purpose so to do. The sovereignty of God means this, and in this is his sovereign power and control. If this limitless control and supreme majesty were not his, then chaotic chance would prevail in the universe, and destruction would run riot, defeating God's eternal purpose and overthrowing his universal dominion. To limit the Almighty in the least in his sovereign control over all worlds and beings and things according to his eternal purpose, would certainly involve this awful result of ruinous chance, and would be equal to saying, "There is no God." For to the everlasting God belongs infinite wisdom to purpose and determine, and omnipotent power to overrule and control all things in all his limitless universe. And so, the word asks, "Who saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?"

What is God's predestination of all things, more than his determinate counsel and foreknowledge as embracing and controlling all things? It means no more than his eternal purpose in all things, and that he supremely rules over all things in all his unlimited universe, subjecting all to his almighty control. Were it not so, there could be no security or safety for his people and saints, and no certainty that the worlds should stand and move in their ordained orbits and order, giving fruitful seasons, perpetuating life, health and comfort, for then chance would bring anarchy, disruption and utter ruin to all. But now the counsel of the Lord standeth, and the purpose of his heart extendeth to all generations, and he is in one mind, and none can turn him. In his eternal mind all things were embraced and perfectly known forever, and no new thought or purpose has ever arisen in his infinite mind. Therefore, all things determined by him to be as they are in time, were predetermined before time or purposed in eternity. Well, God's predetermination according to his eternal purpose which he purposed in himself, as says Paul, is one and the same as his predestination, meaning only that whatever is, the infinite counsel and purpose of the omniscient

and omnipotent God before determined to let it be so, because his almighty power would overrule and order it all to his own eternal glory and the good of all who love him, and are the called according to his purpose. Otherwise, not the least event could take place, because the almighty power of God could and would have prevented it, and be certainly would have done so, unless his wisdom and counsel determined beforehand to let it take place. This is predestination. God either so determined to let all things take place just as they do, or else his knowledge, wisdom, power and control are imperfect and limited, and they take place by chance, to the confusion, disappointment and defeat of God. For we cannot for a moment think that the infinitely wise God would let some things take place in which he has no purpose at all nor takes any notice of them, for this again would make them mere chance events. The Son of God teaches us that not a sparrow can fall on the ground without the Father, and that the very hairs of our heads are numbered by him. Thus is shown the truth that God's wisdom, knowledge and controlling power extends to the smallest things, because the limitless Almighty is omnipresent: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." God is from eternity to eternity the same, and all things were forever known and determined by him, as he has abundantly revealed and taught in the word of truth, even the most wicked deeds which guilty men have committed on earth, the betrayal and murder of the holy Son of God, the lovely Redeemer. He said, "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!" In solemn prayer to God the apostles said, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." This is simply the predestination or predetermination of God, his foreordained counsel and purpose, yet it embraced the blackest crime ever perpetrated, and the God-inspired Peter charged it upon those guilty men that they had been his murderers, saying, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of

God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” He again said, “But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.” Yea, Christ himself said, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.” His apostles were likewise wickedly persecuted, imprisoned, and put to death, yet God appointed them unto this suffering for the truth’s sake, and Christ foretold them that those things should come upon them, and that the wicked who killed them should think that they did God service. But although the Lord has thus spoken of his determinate counsel relative to the wicked, whose murderous wrath he causes to praise him, restraining and preventing the remainder of their wrath, so that neither Satan nor the murderous sons of Jacob could go no farther than to accomplish the holy purpose of God with Job and Joseph, nor the Jews and Gentiles with Jesus, (for they could not break a bone of his body, but should look on him whom they had pierced,) yet the depraved reason and carnal mind of finite and sinful man will find fault with God, and dare object to his plainly revealed word of truth, saying, “Why doth he yet find fault! For who hath resisted his will! Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God! Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus!” This is just what all such objections mean, and is the substance of all such replies against the sovereignty of God, and thus God himself rebukes man and condemns him. To the cruel monarch Pharaoh God said,” Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.” His power and name as the God of the whole earth are so declared through his mighty and righteous dealings with the wicked tyrant ruler of the oppressed children of Israel, and their merciful and wonderful deliverance out of Egypt.

In the case of Pharaoh, Joseph’s brethren, the betrayers and murderers of Jesus, though God’s purpose of wisdom and power,

mercy and blessing, was accomplished through their wicked hands and cruel rage, yet he was holy as well as merciful in all his righteous purpose and sovereign power thus fulfilled, and he justly visited his righteous judgments upon those wicked men, for they were most guilty in thus persecuting the righteous Son and chosen people of God. Their rebellious purpose and wicked determination were to overthrow the dominion and defeat the counsel and purpose of God; but vain was their wrath, and righteous were their calamities which he visited upon them through his wise and almighty providence.

The holy Bible history abounds with many such instances, wherein God himself declared by his inspired prophets the cruel atrocities which individuals and nations should be guilty of, in the execution of his own determined purpose, all of which he would wisely and righteously overrule to his own glory and the good of his people in the end, and for which he would then righteously judge and punish those wicked individuals and cruel nations. The answer of the hated and persecuted Joseph to his guilty and fearing brethren as truly applies to the conduct of all the wicked, saying, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” Joseph thus spoke according to the wisdom and mind of the Lord. Finite and sin-blinded man seeth not as God seeth, and hence his judgment and reason are ever at fault, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God’s thoughts and ways above and out of the sight of man’s thoughts and ways. It would be well for us to read the inspired answer of Elihu to Job, and receive the truth, wherein he says, “Shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just? Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked, and to princes, Ye are ungodly? How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor! for they all are the work of his hands. “With God is terrible majesty. Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict. Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of

heart.” The Lord also said to Job, “Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God, or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? “ Then will I confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.” These divine rebukes should correct and humble us in mute abasement of vain self, before the Holy one.

A scriptural and reverential consideration of all replies against God, who has revealed the truth that his “dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou!” should cure us of all our sinful replies and complaints against the Almighty, who is infinitely holy.

To what is here written, as plainly declared in the Bible, perverted natural reason objects, that it makes the Almighty the author and doer of all the sin and wickedness of the world, while it frees guilty men from all responsibility and guilt, and makes the holy God unjust in punishing them. This is most monstrous and shocking for a sinful creature to dare say in any case or event against his holy Creator, and the objector will meet his just rebuke in the answers of Elihu and the Lord to complaining Job. We all have heard such irreverent complaints and criticisms against the sovereignty of God, as revealed in his electing grace and predestinating purpose, all our lives from the self-wise and self-righteous religious world, but only in these recent fast times have we been pained with hearing and reading such replies against God from men of our own household, some of whom outdo the most vehement Arminian objector in replying against God, as holy Paul declares him in the ninth chapter of Romans, and the Bible in many other places. This is truly alarming and afflicting, and it calls for deep humiliation and supplication before the Lord. It has even been tauntingly and mockingly said by brethren to brethren, “O you can’t help it, for God

predestinated it.” Thus God and his predestination or counsel and purpose are reproached and condemned by such replies, and he is accused of being the abettor, author and doer of the blackest crimes of rebellious and guilty men and devils, and those enemies of God and righteousness are excused and justified on the plea that God ordained that the wrath of man should praise him.’ The sentence of the Lord against the Satan possessed Judas meets and condemns all those God-reviling replies and objections: “And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!” Shall we therefore reply and say, “Judas was not responsible, for God was the author of his treachery, because he “determined “it? How shocking! When betrayed, and Peter drew his sword to prevent the arrest of the holy Lamb of God, the obedient Son said, “Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?” How this should hush all our replies against what God hath determined and ordained in his sovereign will.

An objection to the unlimited sovereignty of God as embracing all things in his predetermining counsel and eternal purpose is, that this would make him the cause or mover and doer of all wickedness, and therefore responsible for it and its author. This is based upon the supposition that whatever God has foreordained or predestinated to be, he himself is the author and doer of by his own agency and power. This is certainly a wrong conclusion, because it is not true, as positively proven in the case of the betrayers and murderers of the Son of God, to whom Peter by the Holy Ghost said, “Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” Their wicked hearts and carnal minds of enmity against God moved and impelled them to do this greatest of all crimes, and they were the responsible and guilty authors of it, yet Peter also said to them, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands,” &c. So it is in all other cases, for while the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God is fulfilled in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, just

as he purposed it to be, so that he is never surprised, disappointed, or the least turned or changed, yet God tempteth no man, nor compelleth anyone to do wickedly, but man's own lusts tempt and entice him in all his sinful ways and wicked works. It was so when by man sin entered into the world, and all wickedness and its punishment, suffering and death, as the result or wages of sin. While this is true, it is also true that the eternal purpose, determinate counsel and foreknowledge of the Lord God omnipotent and omniscient saw and determined and declared the end from the beginning, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."

Of Christ and God and us Paul says, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Thus the Spirit of truth and revelation in Paul connects all things with the counsel and purpose and will of God, who worketh or ordereth and controlleth all things, and all this in subservience to the inheritance of his saints in Christ, which they have obtained by his predestination of them thereunto according to his holy purpose. Thus, all things are unchangeably foreknown, purposed and controlled in the infinite wisdom and omnipotent power of the Almighty, whoso dominion is over all worlds, beings and things, just because he is God, the omnipresent and omnipotent One, the Almighty. In this wonderful truth, that "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth," is the salvation, preservation and perpetual welfare of all his people, "who are kept by his power through faith unto salvation."

As to the mistaken inference, that whatever God has ordained or predetermined or predestinated, he is the cause and author or doer of and responsible for, the Bible instances above given positively show that it is not so, but that the righteous Judge of all the earth holds the wicked doers of crime as willfully guilty, and punishes them accordingly, notwithstanding they were gathered together with malice and guilt, "For to do whatsoever his hand and his counsel

determined before to be done.” This is the inspired testimony and divine record that runs through the oracles of God.

The absolute foreknowledge of God is admitted by all who admit his eternal and immutable attributes or unchangeable perfections, even though they deny that he also foreordained all things, as well as foreknew them. But every objection which is made against the foreordination of God, may with equal force be made against his foreknowledge, for this as certainly establishes all things in the universe as does his predetermination of them. One is as positive and unalterable as the other. All things which God foreknew, cannot be otherwise, but must take place precisely as foreknown. A denial of this, is also a denial of the omniscience of God, and charges imperfection and ignorance to him. But no Baptist denies the foreknowledge of God, but all admit that he certainly foreknew all things whatsoever comes to pass. This establishes the certainty of all things with God as absolutely as would his eternal purpose and decree concerning the certainty of their fulfillment. Hence, the objection to the predestination of any wicked thing or act, that it makes the Holy One the author and cause of such predetermined act, will apply as well against his foreknowledge of such act, and charge him as being the cause and doer of it. But the criticism is not just or true, for the Holy One is not the author or doer of any sin or wickedness, neither is his determinate counsel and foreknowledge causative thereof, and such an inference and imputation is a slander upon the foreknowledge of God as well as upon his foreordination, for they alike make all things certain of fulfillment, just as God determined and foreknew them. It was foretold and determined that wicked Judas should betray the holy Son of God, yet God himself neither betrayed his Anointed nor caused Judas to do this great sin.

Peter said by inspiration, that God verily foreordained before the foundation of the world that Christ should be slain as a lamb for the redemption of his people, but so far from God being his slayer or the causative author of this crime of crimes, his persecuted servant

Stephen boldly said to his own and Christ's wicked murderers, "Of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers," for which the fearful judgments and wrath of God fell upon them, both Jews and Romans, to the uttermost, and most righteously, too. Yet it has been so often asserted of late that all things which God predestinated or foreordained, (for the two words mean the same) he also either does or causes to be done, and so is the author of, that not a few brethren have come to believe and accept as true, without careful scriptural examination; hence the abhorrent saying has become so common now among Baptists, that if God predestinated all things, then he is the author of all the sinful things in the world; that is, he causes them to be. But if brethren would only consider how irreverent it is to charge sin and wickedness to God, whatever his ordained purpose may be in its extent, and would not be misled by this stale old charge of rationalists or Arminians ever since they thus slanderously reported of Paul, but would reverently "search the Scriptures," to see what the Lord has said, they would learn that it is written concerning very many of the most calamitous events and enormous wickedness of men and nations, that God positively declared and decreed that they should take place, just as he foretold by his prophets, and accordingly the most wicked and ungodly men and nations were raised up and did commit all the great wickedness that God had said they should. Please take the pains to read the sacred history of the Israelites, from Moses to the end of the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, and the books of the prophets, from Isaiah to Daniel, and you will be both instructed and awed at the many mighty events, including many national calamities, wars and the destruction of cities, countries and nations, which God righteously decreed should be, ages before they came to pass, and yet those wicked men and ungodly nations, the enemies of God and righteousness, were the foretold and ordained authors and doers of all those wicked things. They were arrogant, self-willed, implacable, sensual and devilish in their wicked course and works, neither knowing nor fearing God; but his holy counsel and purpose embraced, bounded and controlled all those far-reaching and

momentous events, which were to affect unborn generations and coming nations; and thus and in this way the Most High executed his firm decrees and righteous judgments in punishing the ungodly and wicked, and in chastising, correcting and bumbling his own people, that they should worship and glorify him as their God and King, their Father Almighty.

Gentle reader, please read now “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass,” and you will be impressed with awe and godly fear at the majestic and amazing things which the Almighty therein declares shall be fulfilled, for many of those mighty events are very calamitous, yet he in wisdom and holiness has purposed and ordained them, “And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.” Let us join with the four and twenty elders, and say, “We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.” “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him.” Let us join Watts on sovereignty:

*“Keep silence, all created things,
And wait your Maker’s nod;
My soul stands trembling while she sings,
The honors of her God.*

*Life, death and hell, and worlds unknown,
Hang on his firm decree;
He sits on no precarious throne,
Nor borrows leave to be.”*

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” “The eternal God is thy [and my] refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Believing and trusting in the everlasting God and Father Almighty,

D. BARTLEY.

24 Ask For The Old Paths

Signs Of The Times

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“ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS.”

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.” –{ [Jer](#) 6:16}.

Beloved In The Lord: – It is well that we earnestly give heed to this command to Israel. First, let us be solemnly impressed that it is the Lord who thus speaks to his people, as their covenant and faithful God, and for their spiritual welfare, peace and rest.

Next, let us well consider that our best interests, safety and well being, is in asking for the old paths, and walking therein.

It was a divine command to Israel to remove not the ancient landmarks, which their fathers had set. “This is the way; walk ye in it.” “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” He says, “I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.” Prophets of old pointed to Jesus, and apostles followed him. The divine truths which they taught are the old paths, and in the footsteps of Christ is the good way. “Follow thou me,” is his word. “Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” “This man shall be blessed in his deed.” “In me ye shall have peace,” says Jesus, who is our peace. He is the good way.

“God will not leave himself without witness,” and since the apostles he has called faithful men, who have earnestly contended for the faith of his elect, and kept it. Loving their Lord, they kept his commandments. These have walked in the old paths, and the good way, and the Lord was with them. It will refresh, strengthen and help us, by seeing how they lived and died in the faith. Hassell’s Church History is a store-house of knowledge; so let us see a few facts that he records. He says of Andrew Fuller, (page 338): “He confesses that he was ‘saved by mere grace, in spite of himself, by free grace from first to last.’ He declared that he ‘never had any predilection for Arminianism, which appeared to him to ascribe the difference between one sinner and another, not to the grace of God, but to the good improvement made of grace given us in common with others, and that his zeal for the doctrine of grace increased with his years;’ and his dying declarations are that ‘all he had done needed forgiveness; that he trusted alone in sovereign grace and mercy; that he was a poor, guilty creature, but Christ was an almighty Savior; that the doctrine of grace was all his salvation and all his desire; that he had no other hope than from salvation by mere sovereign, efficacious grace, through the atonement of his Lord and Savior; that with this hope he could go into eternity with composure.’” Elder Hassell says, “Mr. Fuller (is) the standard of the New School Baptists in England and the United States;” therefore it cannot be claimed that Mr. Fuller made too much of grace, nor too little of all

that he had ever done, for this was his dying testimony. His solemn, dying words should be a warning to any of us who dwell more upon our works than upon “sovereign, efficacious grace.”

Elder Hassell says, (page 327): “Old School, Primitive, or Bible Baptists, believe and rejoice in the absolute sovereignty of God, their heavenly Father in the entire dependence of all his creatures upon him, both in nature and in grace; a doctrine that leads its adherents to abandon all confidence in creature power, and to exercise a living and a loving trust in the Most High.”

He says, (page 333): Christian predestination far surpasses Arminianism in its moral results, as history abundantly demonstrates. “Predestinarianism is highly promotive of both civil and religious liberty. It represents God as absolute and supreme, and makes all men equal before him. It develops the power of self-government, and a manly spirit of independence, which fears no man, though seated on a throne, because it fears God, the only real Sovereign.” Again, he says, (page 485): “If God is omniscient and omnipotent, and existed alone from eternity, and created all things out of nothing, and disposed of all things in his providence, with all the surrounding circumstances, exactly foreknowing all the results, then, certainly, in one sense, his foreknowledge of all things is equivalent to his foreordination of all things, including the volitions of his creatures, yet without the slightest degree of sin on his part, as the Most Holy God tempts no one to sin. The sinful, carnal mind of fallen, darkened rationalism, paints this certain truth of nature and Scripture in the most revolting colors, preferring that senseless and heartless fate or chance should sit at the helm of the universe; but the regenerated, enlightened, spiritual mind of the child of God incomparably prefers that his holy and heavenly Father should sit at the helm, and direct and work all things according to the counsel of his own will. The foreknowledge of God is, in one sense, so evidently identical with his foreordination that some of the most able living conditionalists propose to revolutionize the Arminian

theology, and make it consistent with itself by the denial of God's foreknowledge of future contingent events." Elder Hassell again says, (page 486): "For, if the will of fallen man is inevitably restrained from spiritual good by his innate depravity, he cannot be said to be truly free, (his fallen will always preferring evil) especially as Christ declares that the sinner is the servant (δουλος, the born slave,) of sin, and must be made free by the Son, if he be free indeed."

Upon the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, Elder Hassell says, (page 203): "These precious declarations are precisely equivalent to the comforting assurance of the apostle Paul, 'that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform (επιτελεω, bring to an end, accomplish, perfect,) it until the day of Jesus Christ,' {**Php** 1:6}, not only the day when he is manifested as the Sun of righteousness and the divine Savior of the trembling sinner, but as shown by the fourth verse below, (**Php** 1:10}, and by {**1Th** 5:2}, and {**2Pe** 3:10}, the day at the close of this dispensation, when Christ shall come in final judgment. This one verse, {**Php** 1:6}, like {**Heb** 12:2}, in which Jesus is called both 'the author and finisher of our faith,' and like {**Isa** 35:10}, in which it is declared that 'the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads,' and like many other verses of Scripture, cuts up the system of conditional salvation by the roots, and incontestably and eternally establishes the system of salvation by sovereign grace, beginning and consummating the good work in the sinner's heart, so that all the glory, without the slightest reservation, shall be given by the saved to God. Every system of conditionalism represents the sinner as doing that which insures his salvation, and which should, therefore, entitle him to the chief glory. As for good works, they are, as we have shown by abundant scriptural quotations, but the fruit of divine grace implanted in the heart."

How true! These are "the old paths," and our fathers walked therein, as did "holy men of old." They unitedly testified that "Salvation is

of the Lord;” “not of works.” Our author states a strong truth in saying, “Every system of conditionalism represents the sinner as doing that which insures his salvation;” for this is just as true of “conditional salvation in time,” as it is of every other conditional salvation, and the entire system of conditionalism entitles the one who is thus saved “to the chief glory.” “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works! Nay; but by the law of faith.” – {[Ro](#) 3:27}. “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” – {[Ro](#) 4:16}. Nothing conditional can be sure, therefore conditional paths are both uncertain and unsafe to walk in.

D. BARTLEY.

27 The Meaning of Grace

Signs Of The Times
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THE MEANING OF GRACE.

BELOVED BRETHREN: – Does it seem meaningless to you that one should write upon the meaning of the simple word “Grace!” Yet it may not be labor in vain. The fact that a word is very common and simple, may incline us to pass over it slightly, and thus we may miss its deep and rich meaning; its strength and comfort. Perhaps none of us have fully investigated and understood the divine fullness of the precious meaning of the grace of God. The writer feels that he has come short in this. Therefore, both for his own good and yours, let us together consider the divine meaning of the Bible term, grace.

The standard dictionary thus defines divine grace, as a noun: “(1) The unmerited love and favor of God in Christ: hence free gift. (2)

The divine influence acting within the heart, to regenerate, sanctify, and keep it. (3) A state of reconciliation to God, of deliverance from the dominating power of sin, and of full participation in and enjoyment of God's favor and free gifts on the ground of Christ's merits. (4) The power or disposition to exercise saving faith, to live the Christian life, and to endure with patience the trials of the earthly state." Hence, said an eminent writer, "The grace of God is the life of the soul, as the soul is the life of the body." These renderings of God's grace are definite, clear, and scriptural, and they plainly show that grace means this, and all this. The most eminent of the apostles, Paul, fully supports this meaning when he says, "By the grace of God I am what I am." This sweeping statement embraces and covers his whole Christian life, his faith in Christ, and his ministry of faith and love in the gospel of grace. His Savior and Master expressed the same fullness of grace, saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Sufficient against his weakness, the buffetings of Satan, and the thorn of sin in the flesh.

"On the ground of Christ's merits." This is eminently scriptural. For no truth is more fully revealed than that all divine gifts and blessings to the children of men, including all spiritual blessings, are freely bestowed upon us, "On the ground of Christ's merits." This entirely excludes all our own supposed merit, and hence excludes all boasting, as that God will bless us for the good we do, because of our obedience to him; for all his gifts and blessings of salvation are in Christ, and for Christ's sake. One text fully sustains this: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things"

Such is the precious meaning of grace. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ himself is grace: the fullness of grace: the riches of grace: the glory of grace. His work of eternal redemption, his righteous life in our flesh, his atoning death for our sins, his burial, and victorious resurrection for our justification, his glorious ascension to the throne of God as our Advocate with the Father: grace means all this. Yea,

mere! for the watchful and loving care of Jesus our good Shepherd over us, his leading us beside the still waters, and causing us to lie down in green pastures, his giving us peace and rest, and not leaving us comfortless, his Spirit and his love that he puts in our hearts, and his sweet words of faith, and cheer, and promise, which he puts in our mouths, this, all this, is grace!

Come with me, now, to the Bible, and let us notice some of the excellencies of the grace of God. And, first, its source. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” “And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” – {[Joh](#) 1:14,16-17}. Second, its character. It is free and undeserved. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” – {[2Co](#) 8}. “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” – {[Eph](#) 2:7-9}. “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” – {[2Ti](#) 1:9}. Third. It is justifying. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” – {[Ro](#) 2:5,24}. Fourth. It is saving. “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved, us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved.)” – {[Eph](#) 2:1,5}. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation,” &c. – {[Tit](#) 2:12}. Fifth. It is purifying. “Teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” – {[Tit](#) 2:12}. “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably

with reverence and godly fear.” – {**Heb** 12:28}, Sixth. It is strengthening and sufficient. “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” – {**2Co** 12:9}. “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” – {**2Ti** 2:1}. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” – {**Heb** 4:16}. Seventh. Its use and benefit. “For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God.” – {**2Co** 4:15}. “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”

{**Ro** 5:17}. “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” – {**Eph** 3:8}. Eighth. Its victorious reign. “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” – {**Ro** 5:20-21}. “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” – {**Ro** 6:11}. Ninth. Who are its partakers? “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” – {**Eph** 6:21}. God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” – {**Jas** 4:6}. “Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” – {**1Pe** 5:5}. Tenth. Its consummation. “He shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shouting’s, crying, Grace, grace, unto it.” – {**Zec** 4:7}. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” – {**Eph** 1:3,6}.

Grace is thus shown to be an active principle in the hearts and lives of Christians or believers in Christ, divinely influencing and enabling them in all their spiritual exercises, and true and acceptable worship of God, and service in his kingdom of grace. The Scriptures following also express and show this: “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.” – {[Ro](#) 12:3,6-8}. Grace, then, underlies and supports all this active walk and work in the divine life, this “obedience unto the faith.” And faith itself is a gift of grace, as Paul says: “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” – {[Ro](#) 4:16}. “I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” – {[Ro](#) 15:15-16}. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” – {[Col](#) 3:16-17}.

*“O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrained to be!”*

In all the “oracles of God,” grace, as a divine principle, thus stands out preeminently with heavenly radiance and glory, rising infinitely superior to, and obscuring every other principle, of whatever nature

or name, whether it be law, or conditions, or works, it matters not; for, as compared with glorious grace, they are weak and mean, and as nothing. For we have seen that in all the work of salvation, grace reigns; reigns through righteousness; reigns unto eternal life; reigns by our Lord Jesus Christ. No other principle in God's universe has this power and success; nor to any other power is such boundless praise and glory ascribed in the Bible. As we have seen, the holy Scriptures magnify the grace of God in all the work and way of salvation from sin and its dominion unto death, from its beginning unto its ending in glory, and immortality, and eternal life. In the riches of grace, the Lord's hand laid the foundation of his spiritual house, his heavenly and holy temple; and in the praise of the glory of his sovereign grace he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings of grace, grace unto it.

*“Grace all the work shall crown,
In everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.”*

The heart experienced confession of every saved sinner, must be in unison with all this divine testimony in the record, that God gave of his Son, not only when he began the good work of salvation in us, but in performing it unto perfection, in the full revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ in us, in his resurrection-life and holiness and glory. For by him grace thus reigns in us through righteousness; therefore, all righteousness and good works in the saved in Christ Jesus, are the result of reigning grace in their hearts, and the praise is due to grace. What honored and blessed subject of grace should want it otherwise! Since it is with grace in our hearts, that any teach and admonish one another, and sing praise to the Lord, why should we claim part of the honor, by saying that all this reasonable service to the God of all grace, depends largely upon ourselves? It is infinitely more befitting a weak, dependent sinner to say, with humble and yet noble Paul, after he had labored in the gospel work more than all the apostles,

“Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” Take away the grace of God which is with any obedient child or servant of his, as a reigning principle and power in the heart, so that he would have to really “depend upon himself” in his obedience and service to God, and what a pitiable spectacle and miserable failure he would make! But the grace that reigns through righteousness and saves the sinner from his sins, is a never-failing, ever springing well-spring of life in the soul, like the love of Christ, that constraineth us, so “that the Christian loves the God he knows, and serves the God he loves.” Jesus, by whom grace reigns, says, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” This is the grace that saves the blessed one in whom this water or life is a living well, springing up, and lifting the heart and soul, heavenward and to God. Jesus gives the true worshippers this living water, and, so far from its springing up in them being dependent upon themselves, they are dependent upon this fountain of grace, and blessing springing up in them, to inspire them with a spirit of true devotion and service. So all praise is due to the grace of God that is with us; and not only are we saved by grace, but it is the grace of God wherein we stand, and are obedient unto the faith. O that we were perfectly understood and realized this in our hearts! for then should we be mere humble, reverent and prayerful, and mere to the praise of the glory of God’s grace.

The active effect, and heavenly sentiment of grace, is thus expressed:

“Keep, O keep me, Lord, from sinning,
Guide me in the way of peace
Make me walk in
All the paths of holiness.”
“Free grace only
Shall resound in heaven’s land.”

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

D. BARTLEY.

28 Love and Obedience

Signs Of The Times
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LOVE AND OBEDIENCE.

Brethren Beloved: – It is in my heart to write to you of love and obedience, that we may see the relation between them, and so the better appreciate the love of God in Christ, and magnify his holy name for his love bestowed upon us.

Text: “If a man love me, he will keep my words.” – {[Joh](#) 14:23}. The Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us, thus spoke to the apostles. It was when they were separated from all the multitudes of men, the dark night of his betrayal, in his last discourse with his loving disciples before his death on the Roman cross for their sins the next day. He had just given them his new commandment of love to one another, and had said to them, “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.”

Our blessed Lord in these brief words (the Father's word) which they heard or received, blessedly enlightens and instructs his disciples; and that they might understand the true and spiritual meaning of this word, he adds, "But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." This should be fulfilled to them in and "at that day," after the Lord should come up out of the legal night, the dark wilderness of sin and death, with his bride leaning upon him. Hence, says the beloved John, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." In this "glorious day" "the resurrected Son of God is "the Sun of righteousness," "the life and the light" of all his disciples, in whom he is, and they are in him. This is a most sacred union, holy and everlasting and blessed. The Son, now risen from the dead, to die no more, is in the Father, and the living and loving disciples are in the Son, and he is in them. Herein is the source, the origin and fountain of all divine life and love and obedience to the commandments of Jesus. In this is found the nature and the fulfillment of his new commandment to his disciples. Divine love is the foundation, the springing fountain, the "good ground," the constraining power and holy motive, which underlies and prepares the obedient heart and active life unto keeping the commandments of Jesus. Nothing else is pleasing to God, nor accepted of him, but is only "a form of godliness, but denies the power thereof." It is drawing nigh unto God with the mouth, and honoring him with the lips, while the heart is far from him. Such professed service and formal obedience is selfish, self-honoring and self-pleasing, and its prompting motive and incentive is the reward to be received for such work and service. Jesus says of all such workers, "Verily, they have their reward." For they serve for the reward, the pay, the good they shall receive for their good service. This reward or pay they call "time salvation," which, they say, is a conditional reward for conditional obedience or service, which they either voluntarily perform, or let alone. Who cannot see that all this is of self, and for self? Remove this actuating

motive of conditional reward, and deny this selfish, legal principle, and those who hold to it will at once say that your doctrine leads to saying, “Let us do evil, that good may come;” and, “Let us sin, that grace may abound.” For they seem to see and feel no sufficient motive and incentive in the grace of God’s love shed abroad in the heart, the powerful motive that Paul felt, saying, “For the love of Christ constraineth us,” to constrain them to obey from the heart, or keep the commandments of Jesus because they love him. So they labor to establish another principle as a motive to prompt to religious service, and this thing they have named, “conditional time salvation,” which “depends upon themselves,” and which salvation consists in “conditional rewards,” or payment for conditional works of obedience. That this is the underlying principle and actuating motive of the entire religious world in their professed service and formal obedience to God, from the pope of Rome to Brigham Young and the Mormons, there can be no question; but for any of the Old Baptists to teach and try to enforce this slavish or servile, legal and selfish principle, is passing strange, and its very nature and only tendency is to undervalue and deny the power and sufficiency of the grace of God, and the efficiency of the constraining love of Christ. This legal principle of conditionalism in salvation, whether it be everlasting or time salvation, turns away from the divine love and grace as not sufficiently powerful to save and lead to righteous and godly living in this present world, and substitutes the creature-pleasing motive of conditional rewards, and the creature-terrorizing goad or spur of punishments, as more successful in “winning souls to Christ,” or causing Christians to keep his commandments. It is a snare and a cheating delusion, which, while it may honor and please the self-serving sinner, dishonors the Savior and his grace and love. His true and precious word is, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Thus, he teaches that keeping his commandments springs out of love to him, as the pure water from its living fountain, and the good fruit from the good tree. This is the principle and law of God in grace as in nature. “God is love.” “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of

God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love. “We love him, because he first loved us.” {[1Jo 4](#)}. Our love, then, is of God, and he is the fullness and cause of our divine love: “Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” {[Ro 5](#)}. So then, any religious work or service which does not spring from this divine love, as the manifest effect and fruit of love, is not obedience to the commandments of our loving Lord, though it may be immersion and joining a church, praying and preaching. On the other hand, Jesus says, “If a man love me, he will keep my words.” This is the certain fruit of love to him; this love inspires and moves that man or one to keep his words, and this willing keeping of his words is the active power and expression of love to the Lord Jesus. How shameful and slanderous to charge that this heart-given obedience and service of love, which is the reigning grace of God, reduces the loving servant of Christ to a mere irresponsible and passive machine. So far from it, the most sacred responsibility, the dearest obligations and the most self-sacrificing, consecrated and devoted obedience known to angels or men, in heaven or on earth, arise from and exist in Love. Without this, all religious sacrifice, service and work is merely a heartless, hollow form, a mocking hypocrisy, and so far from being pleasing to the Lord and rewarded by him, he says, “He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.” However zealous he may be in religious work, he does not keep the commandments of Jesus, only as he yields the self-denying and true obedience of love. And this unbribed, unbought service of love finds its blessed and full recompense and reward in thus laying the heart’s best devotions upon the altar of love. And with such sacrifices God is well pleased. The sacrifice of a broken heart and contrite spirit is honoring to him, and to this one he hath respect.

“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous,” says the loving John. This is like the word of Jesus in the text, showing that keeping his

commandments cannot be separated from the love of God, and they bear the close relation to each other of cause and effect.

It is regarded by all good people naturally and morally, that the self-sacrificing service of human love, which makes willing martyrs of thousands of mothers especially, and of fathers and children, wives and husbands, who do all and suffer all for love's sake, is the most beautiful and potent and sacred sentiment and motive in human life, compared with which any service or obedience which is prompted by the hope of self-reward, or the fear of punishment, is unworthy, sordid and mean. A service that is bought, or done for hire or reward, is servile and selfish, for the one who performs such service does so for the benefit he shall receive, and the reward is the motive and impelling cause. This principle makes the world extremely selfish and sordid. It has corrupted and blighted the best governments of men, and it has vitiated all the religions of the entire religious world. It entered the temple of God itself, polluted and debased it, so that his holy Son told this very religious people, who professed to be serving God in their devotions, that they had made his Father's house a den of thieves. More lamentable still, this principle and motive for religious service and formal obedience to the Lord's commandments has crept into the church of God. So that even here, where the new commandment of love should be the only law, the one sweetly constraining motive, wherein the loving voice of him who "loved the church and gave himself for it," should be lovingly heeded, saying, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" alas! in this sacred sanctuary of loving worship to the God of love, this corrupting principle of serving for reward has entered, and makes its appeals to the selfishness of man, saying, Come and join the church and serve the Lord, for the reward you shall receive. The fruit of this is, just as it was in the church at Antioch, and the churches of Galatia, confusion and trouble. It is nothing more nor less than sowing to the flesh, and of the flesh reaping corruption. This principle of conditional rewards for conditional obedience and service, as a motive and incentive in religious service and worship,

is displeasing to the holy God, who looks not at the outward appearance, but sees the heart as it is, and it is corrupting to those who thus serve. They serve not the Lord, but themselves. The children of the loving Father in heaven should never be tempted by this flesh-pleasing motive, as the devil thus tempted the holy Son of God, holding out to him a big reward. It is an appeal to selfishness and self-love; therefore, it is worldly and legal in its nature, and it is the motive principle in all worldly or carnal religion and service.

“If a man love me, he will keep my words,” is the infallible doctrine of the loving and obedient Son of God. Love to the adored Savior gives the loving soul the good will to keep his words, and it is the divine power and pure motive which causes him to believe in the Lord with the heart, and to obey him from the heart. By the Holy Ghost is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Thus and in this way do the loving and willing and obedient children of God worship him in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. There is nothing in true worship and service which love will not sweetly move the loving heart to do; no sacrifice too hard or great for pure love to make. Even “faith worketh by love and purifieth the heart.” Remember, “love is of God,” and the love of God is the most holy and powerful and active of all powers and principles and motives. The faith that is born of love is the only principle and motive by which it is possible to truly obey and please God. It is this that is dearer than life, and stronger than death. It made Abraham willing to quit his kindred and become a stranger in a strange land. It led his willing feet up Mount Moriah, to offer up his Son, whom he loved more than his own life. It led the obedient feet of the suffering Son of God up Mount Calvary, to give himself a willing and all-sufficient sacrifice of compassionate and devoted love. O blessed obedience of all-consuming, holy, deathless love! May I thus love and obey, serve and please God. The meek and lowly service of one such loving heart, though it be given in tears

and self-sacrifice and suffering, is infinitely more pleasing and glorifying to God, who is rich in mercy and great in love, than all that has ever been offered in formal worship to him by countless human souls from any other principle or motive.

In conclusion, then, if we keep the commandments of God, it is his love in our hearts as the single and sacred cause and motive by which we do so. If any other principle or persuasion actuates our obedience or service, we are not keeping the commandments of God, which can only be kept in the singleness of the pure love of God in the heart. The hope of reward as an incentive to keeping his commandments, has no place in the service of love. Neither is the fear of punishment an incentive in keeping the loving Father's commandments, and such a notion is slavish and a reproach to love. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love," is the lovely sentiment of the loving John. The love of the Father and Son and Spirit is the blessed and infinite motive and active cause of all the great and infinite sacrifice and obedience and service of the holy Three One for us; and all the blessings and joys of salvation which we receive, on earth and in heaven, are the unmerited and unbought rewards of the love of God, the riches of his grace.

Now, the love of God is not conditional love, neither is his grace conditional. So, then, salvation from sin, from any sin or all sin, is not conditional, for the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin, and his atoning blood is not conditional. It is grace, then, that saves us from all sin. Our entire service of obedience is the service of love, and "love is of God;" it is the gift or grace of God, and he has bestowed it upon us so richly as to call us his children. So our obedience is neither the bought service of a hired servant, nor the coerced service of a slave, but it is the heart-given service of a loving child. The motive in keeping the Lord's commandments, therefore, is neither the hope of reward, nor the fear of punishment, but because we love him. This, dear brethren, is like his obedient and

self-sacrificing service for us, for it was because he loved us that he gave his obedient life of suffering for us.

“If a man love me, he will keep my words.” “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” “Love is the fountain whence all true obedience flows.” “The Christian loves the God he knows, and serves the God he loves.” Love sanctifies and beautifies all devotional service, and makes it acceptable, honoring and pleasing. No other principle or motive can. God will accept no other. “If ye love me,” is the only fitting or qualifying principle, the only “wedding garment” in which we can enter into our Lord’s holy service and keep his commandments. Unless his love is the consecrating motive and prompting principle or sentiment in the heart of the worshiper, he does not, he cannot enter here, but is an intruder in this sacred place, and has no right to the holy commandments of the blessed Lord. His commandments are kept and done in love to him. Nothing else but love will keep them. O, that we all more perfectly knew and realized this sacred truth.

*“Do not I love thee, O my Lord?
Behold my heart and see,
And turn each cursed idol out
That dares to rival thee.”*

D. BARTLEY.

Crawfordsville, Ind., July 28, 1899.

29 The London Confession of Faith

Signs Of The Times
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THE LONDON CONFESSION OF FAITH.

Dear Brethren In The Faith Of God: – As the plea has been made that the meaning of English words, though plain and clear when used, yet becomes dark and obscure in later times, so it is with the declaration of the religious belief of the Baptists of the seventeenth century, in the year of our Lord, 1651), and published in the London Confession. And as this doubtful meaning of this ancient declaration of what the holy Scriptures teach was made the plea for holding what was called a “National Convention “of “leading Baptists “of the United States, last November, at Fulton, Ky., for the purpose of adding a supplement to the London Confession, to make plain and clear the meaning of some of its obscure parts, therefore it is well that we read for ourselves the words of our faithful brethren of more than two hundred years ago, upon some of the chief points said to be obscure and uncertain in meaning. So the following correct extracts from the Confession are given. In their address to the reader they say, “In those things wherein we differ from others, we have expressed ourselves with all candor and plainness. “ We have also taken care to affix texts of Scripture for the confirmation of each article in our confession, in which work we have studiously endeavored to select such as are most clear and pertinent for the proof of what is asserted by to.” How does this agree with the recent pretext that those devout servants of God failed to make their meaning plain to the intelligence of Baptists of this time? This is casting reproach upon those faithful men of God, as well as charging ignorance and stupidity to the Baptists of our time, for it is virtually saying that the common reader now cannot understand the real meaning of candid and plain words. It is a vaunting assumption on the part of a few self-styled “leading Baptists,” and it betrays a lack of “candor and plainness “before God and men.

In chapter two, speaking of God, the Confession says, “Who is immutable, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite,

most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory. “ He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom and to whom are all things; and he hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest. His knowledge is infinite, infallible and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works and in all his commands.” All these statements are very candid and plain, and they need no master to explain them.

In chapter three those candid and plain men of God speak of God’s decree, saying, “God hath decreed in himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin, nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, bat rather established, in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree.” The simple meaning of this sentence is so frank, candid and plain to the mind of every reader, that it will stand against the efforts of every modern convention of “leading Baptists “to doctor and obscure it to suit modern theology. Every child in the kingdom of God’s grace as well knows the clear sense of this declaration of faith in the sovereign power and wisdom and holiness of the omnipotent and unchangeable God as does any teacher in Israel, so that no recent footnotes added to it can explain it away or disguise the plain meaning of those solemn words of wisdom. They are based upon Scripture proofs, which are omitted here for brevity; and in this one sentence on the holy decree of God is most plainly declared just the candid belief of all who humbly and devoutly revere God as at once almighty and holy. These simple words of those godly men of old do most clearly repel the false accusation, that this solemn and

scriptural belief in the complete sovereignty of the Holy One makes him the author of sin, and his holy decree the cause of the wicked acts of ungodly men. Arminian opposers of God's sovereignty have ever made this slanderous charge, which is nothing but replying against God and condemning the Almighty, but not till recently have professed Predestinarian Baptists joined in this slanderous report against the unlimited decree of God, that it makes him the author of and responsible for all the things he has embraced in his changeless counsel, purpose and decree. Faithful Paul has met all such false inferences when he says, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault! For who hath resisted his will!" He refutes the slander and rebukes the false accuser when he adds, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus!" This is just what all such "things" do say when they speak thus against God. Who are men who thus rail against the Most High? Hear the answer of God: "All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity."

In chapter five of the London Confession, upon Divine Providence, it says, "God, the Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom, doth hold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for which they were created, according unto his infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of his own will; to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness and mercy.

"Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, so that there is not anything befalls any by chance or without his providence; yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely or contingently.

“The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in his providence, that his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men (and that not by a bare permission); which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends; yet so as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is or can be the author or approver of sin.”

These candid and plain words are easy to be understood, and their simple meaning is so clear and open to every fair and candid reader, that it would require several conventions to so doctor their evident teaching as to make them seem to mean something else. So far from any of the words quoted from this old Confession being obsolete or out of use, or their meaning then being different from what the same words mean now, no writer of this time could use plainer or easier words to express what he believes in regard to God. But we suspect that the real objection to these simple and strong words is not that their meaning is dark or obscure to any fair and candid mind, but that the doctrine thus clearly declared by those ancient Baptists is too strong for the appetite of some modern Baptists, who yet are not ready to come out candidly and plainly and say they do not accept the doctrine of the London Confession, but they will therefore labor to place a meaning on it to suit themselves, like doctors will sugarcoat their bitter pills to deceive the weak stomach of the patient. But why would some Baptists, who profess to accept the London Confession upon the sovereignty of God, as quoted above, yet persist in charging upon other Baptists, who do sincerely accept and believe it, that therefore they represent the Holy One as at once the author and cause and doer of all wickedness, and that all sin is the result of his decree? For in charging this result upon all who truly believe this doctrine set forth so carefully and plainly in the London Confession relative to the attributes of the omnipotent and immutable God, they likewise cast the same reproach upon all the

Baptists who wrote and believed that Confession. Is this honest and just and of good report! Is it brotherly and kind and the way of “Peace on earth and good will toward men!” Our brethren all along the passing generations, ever since Paul said, “(As we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come,” have been thus slanderously reported, because, with Paul, they have believed in the Lord God Omnipotent, “who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” It was to meet and refute this “slandorous report” of them, and to show that their adoring belief in the Holy One did not make him the author of sin, that his humble and true servants of old put forth their true belief in the London Confession. Until latterly such uncharitable and reproachful accusations have come from the multiform hosts of Arminian will-worshipers, who limit the Almighty in his attributes and power, and it was not so strange that they would thus slander the doctrine of God as proclaimed by his true servants; but now, alas, Baptists themselves join in this “railing accusation “against the servants of the Most High, and flaunt forth the unblushing outcry, that to believe he predestinated all things, makes him the author of all sin, and that all wickedness is the “result “of God’s unlimited decree. Yet they say they stand on the London Confession! That Confession honors God in his “eternal power and Godhead,” as having “Decreed in himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER COME TO PASS; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin, nor hath fellowship with any therein.” But such most unfair criticisms and slanderous reports against the unlimited decree of God do dishonor him and falsely accuse his worthy servants of old. The Lord will rebuke those who “speak evil of dignities,” and despise the dominion of God, bringing railing accusation against his true and faithful servants of old, among whom was Elder Gilbert Beebe, a valiant man of God in Israel, who gave his long life in defense of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, yet he is assailed and his doctrine aspersed, long after the Lord, whom he loved and served, took him to himself, and he is charged with having

proclaimed a doctrine so abominable that it made our Holy God the author and doer of all the abhorrent crimes of all wicked men, because he believed just what is declared above by those holy men of old, who adopted the London Confession. When it comes to this, dear brethren, it may well be asked, “Is there not a cause? O, how deplorable, when Baptists will profess to publicly adopt and stand on the London Confession of Faith, then publicly reproach and denounce the very doctrine that it most solemnly and plainly sets forth pertaining to God and his holy counsel and decree. That Confession is not binding on the consciences of any, as it is only a synopsis of what the Baptists then believed the Scriptures to teach, while they accepted the Bible alone as the standard of their faith; but why should any claim to accept this Confession, when they are at war against its teaching on the Decree and Providence of God, and cruelly reproach the brethren who do honestly believe it, with making God the author and responsible cause of all wickedness and crime? Is this “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?”

For one, I do most truly believe every word here copied from that good Confession, and I accept it as a clear, just and full refutation of the untrue charge that the Baptists who thus believe make God the author of any sin, for we revere him as most holy, and believe he will judge all liars, who reproach his holy name and slander his sovereignty and truth, with righteous judgment.

In the filial fear of God and love of his truth, yours to serve,

D. BARTLEY.

33 God is Omnipotent and Active

GOD IS OMNIPOTENT AND ACTIVE.

GOD reveals himself as both omnipresent and omnipotent, the almighty, who tills immensity and inhabits eternity. So there is no fleeing from his presence or going beyond his power. His dominion is unlimited and from everlasting to everlasting. God is the supreme One. No other power is supreme. Therefore, all powers, beings and things are subject to the Almighty. If not, then God is not the supreme ruler, and there is no sovereign power in the boundless universe. How terrible this would be! But we rejoice that our God “sits upon no precarious throne, nor borrows leave to be.” He declares that what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. His wisdom, knowledge and understanding are as all comprehensive and infinite as his purpose, dominion and control are unlimited and omnipotent. God is neither subject to influence nor to change. If he could be influenced, to that extent he would be controlled and changed. But his word says, “I am the Lord: I change not.” With him there is not the shadow of turning, says James. The word again says, “He is in one mind, and none can turn him.”

These are primary or first truths relative to the Most High. They enter into his very being, are essential to his infinite attributes, to the eternal qualities and perfections of his adorable Godhead. The Bible faithfully and largely records and proclaims this infinite and absolute supremacy of Jehovah. The sun and moon and stars, with all his handiworks in creation, and the fixed laws in nature, also show forth the omnipotence and overactive power of God. To no other being, whether archangel or seraphim, cherubim or saint, prophet or apostle, belongs these crowning perfections of the eternal and Holy One. We may be awed in the presence of Moses and Elijah, Gabriel and Michael, Daniel and John, who went before Jesus; yet

they were but the servants of God, and all that made them good and great was his free gift to them.

“With God is terrible majesty,” said Elihu to Job. At best our thoughts of “his eternal power and Godhead” fall infinitely below his high and holy throne; and he himself says, that as heaven is higher than the earth, so are his thoughts and ways above our thoughts and ways.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.” All these are the creatures of God, whether animate or inanimate. His omnipotent power ruleth over and controlled them all, and they are all subjected to his universal dominion. God has set the bounds of all, so that no creature can go beyond or escape his almighty power. Were this possible, the sovereignty of God would be destroyed, and himself hurled from his eternal throne. The Bible overflows with the record of these sublime truths concerning the Almighty. What do they teach us! That God is highly exalted in heaven infinitely above all the universe, and that the earth and all it contains is his footstool; yea, more, that all nations are as grasshoppers, as the small dust of the balances, and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as less than nothing, before the Most High. How stupid the thought, then, that creatures thus insignificant can and do influence and move, control and defeat the Almighty; that man, who is himself “less than nothing and vanity,” can and does prevent, hinder and disappoint the Lord God omnipotent. O how weak and absurd is this insolent presumption! Yet the worldly wise and all worldly religionists thus dishonor God, and they vainly imagine that he is subject to creature influences, insomuch that he can be moved even by their prayers. The Lord says, “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.” In a sermon an aged preacher once said in my hearing, “Prayer is the lever that moves the arm that moves the world.” All worldly religious teachers thus regard the relation of God toward men. They hold that he is acted upon and moved by his creatures;

that he is subject to them, and may be largely influenced and moved in his conduct towards them and other sinners by their prayers and zeal and works for him in his service, as they suppose. The professed christianity of the world, no less than the Jew's religion, is based and built upon this belief. Because we serve God, he is moved to reward us. Thus stands the world's religion.

But the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the true worship of God, is just the opposite of this. Our perfect Teacher thus states it: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This cometh down from God out of heaven; the fountain of eternal life is its source; it raises up its blessed recipient into everlasting life, and all his love to God and holiness, his spiritual devotion, worship and service, are the free and fervent springing up in him of this water of life. Thus his soul is as the garden of the Lord, spontaneously sending up the incense of love and praise, saying to the Lord in prayer, "Come into thy garden and eat thy pleasant fruits." This, our Lord says, "I shall give him." When given, it shall be in him a fountain of life, and shall spring up to the glory of the Giver. What moves him to give it! Hear him in prayer to the eternal Father: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." What moved the Father to give them to the Son? Jesus tells us in his prayer, saying, "Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedest me before the foundation of the world." Therefore, the everlasting love of God the Father for his Son, and for all his people, whom he gave the Son, and chose and blessed in him, moved him to send his Son into the world, to die for them, and to give unto them eternal life. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," testifies the beloved John.

Love is the greatest of all, Paul says, and John says, “God is love.” “Love is strong as death,” said Solomon. Says Paul again, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Love, therefore, the love of God, is the strongest and most active power in the universe, and he bestows his love upon his people in its divine freeness and active potency. Yea, the love of God enfolds them in Christ Jesus, his well-beloved Son, in whom the Father has blessed them with all spiritual blessings, unto the end that they should be holy and without blame before him in love, “to the praise of the glory of his grace.” “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” And so “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” It is the divine power of the love of God in the hearts of his dear children that savingly and blessedly influences and moves and controls them in all their emotions and devotions God ward. The sentiment and language of their hearts therefore is, “For the love of Christ constraineth us.” “The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” Now, to be thus constrained by the love of Christ springing up in the heart, and divinely drawn with the loving-kindness of the Lord to run after him in the paths of holiness, is as far removed from a cold, faithless, legal, heartless, selfish and machine-like service as heaven is above earth, or as the love of God is more holy and powerful than the love of self.

In religious service and professed divine worship, there are but these two incentives or prompting motive powers: the love of God, or the love of self, and all who are religious at all, are actuated and moved by either the one or the other. They are either moved by the power of God, or they think to move him by their own power. For it must be that man is either subjected to the power of the Lord and made

subservient to his will, or else the Lord is subservient to man and moved by his will and works. The enabling motive and power to desire and do, must either descend from God to man, constraining him God ward, or else it must ascend from man to God, constraining him man ward. On which side are we! Shall we believe that God is omnipotent toward us, bringing us into obedience to his power of love in our hearts! or shall we hold that we are potent toward him, and that our obedience moves him toward us in bestowing his love upon us! One of these two ways it must be. Either God moves upon man, or man moves upon God. Either man or God must yield in will and power, and be brought into the passive voice or state, and say, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt,” or there can be no reconciliation and communion between them. Now, therefore, who should yield and be subservient and passive, be as nothing, and let the other be all in all! For in the matter of will and power, either man or the Lord Jehovah must surrender and yield, for the controlling power and influence of one or the other must prevail, and he must be placed upon the throne and reign supreme, but the other must be made submissive and be acted upon. This is an evident truth, and it pervades the Bible. God is in heaven, man is upon earth; God is infinite, man is finite; God is the Creator, man is the creature; God bestows all, man receives all. “For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God,” declares faithful Paul.

“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness.” Thus the Lord reveals to us and in us the place of power, and how it is that his people are made willing to serve him in the beauties of holiness – not their own wrought holiness, but his holiness wrought in them by his divine power. “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” This is the way of it, and thus do we receive it, my dear

brethren in the Lord. “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.” “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

Much has been published in Baptist papers in opposition to the sovereign power of God towards his people, as manifested in their obedience of faith and love in Christ Jesus, wrought in their hearts by the Spirit and grace of God; and this has been treated with derision and ridiculed, as reducing the obedient children of God to mere machines, which have neither life nor love, and they are reproached as “Can’t help its,” and the meek and lowly Christ is jeered as doing all the obeying for his obedient followers, who love him, and therefore keep his commandments. All this is charged against the sovereign will and power of God as wrought in his redeemed and new-born children, by the subduing, controlling and leading power of his Spirit and love in their hearts, “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;” that this makes them irresponsible, destroys their obligation unto loving obedience, and makes them as passive as unliving stones. That many dear brethren in Christ, who desire to know the truth as it is in him and walk in it, have been thus prejudiced and misled, there is no doubt, but that this opposition and accusation is either a misconception or misrepresentation of the sovereign power of God and the reign of his grace in the hearts of his dear children, is certainly true. All such captions railing and disputing is divinely met and rebuked by the word of the Lord in the ninth chapter of Romans, for all this caviling is replying against God and doing despite to his sacred truth. Brethren should pause, und solemnly consider whence they are tending and drifting, as in the presence of God, “who will by no means clear the guilty.”

So far from this reigning power of the God of salvation lessening the sacred obligations of his people, whom he hath called with an holy calling, or weakening the utility of loving and faithful

exhortation to their meek submission unto the will of God in a loving and heart-given service to him, it gives to these their sacred and binding force, and is the soul and essence of all holy obligation and loving obedience; and nothing else than the true and loving service of the pure in heart will God accept. And all this is the fruit of his Spirit, the springing up of his love shed abroad in the heart. The Lord never speaks in vain to his people. “When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.” It is so in every case. Omnipotence never tries. “His arm shall rule for him.” When he speaks, the mad persecutor tremblingly prays, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” The will of the Lord is at once supreme.

Now, as to the objection to the omnipotent sovereignty of the Almighty over all the universe, and the active reign of his grace in the hearts and lives of his redeemed, quickened and called-out people in saving them from the dominion of sin; that this subjects their will and brings them into a passive state to the will of the Lord; in mind and heart I have been led into a prayerful and scriptural consideration of this prevailing and fault-finding complaint, and will kindly meet it in the light of revealed truth.

First, then, there is but the Lord and man, the Spirit and the flesh, the will of God and the will of man, the mind of Christ and the mind of the flesh or carnal mind. These are opposite and contrary the one to the other; therefore, before there can be harmony and peace, nearness and communion between God and man, the will of man must be subdued and brought into passive or unresisting submission to the will of God, and God must be absolutely supreme in the mind and heart of man, and his heart-given prayer to his Sovereign must be, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” In no other way than this entire surrender of man can he truly worship God. Second, the holy Son of God taught this way and truth to his followers, and he himself perfectly lived it in all his life in the flesh, never once asserting his own will as a man, but always making the will of God his Father supreme. So when he speaks of the discrimination of

God's sovereign will and grace, in hiding the blessings and glories of salvation from the wise and prudent, and revealing them to babes, who know but little, and are receptive and passive, Jesus said, "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." This was enough for the loving and submissive "man Christ Jesus." His own will was entirely subdued or surrendered and swallowed up in the supreme will of God. Therefore, Jesus himself was passive, and God was active. Let us hear and heed his touching prayer, saying, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." This is entire and absolute surrender. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." So he was passive, submissive and yielding. Shall we therefore deride him as a "Can't help it," and as a mere machine! O for shame! Is it any better to thus stigmatize his humble followers! Hear him say again, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me! the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." "The Son can do nothing? of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." This is enough, and it is pointed and positive, showing the entire abnegation or renunciation of the will of the holy Son of man, and the absolute control of the will of God in him, and that he of himself could do nothing, but the Father who dwelt in him did the works.

Third, in all things Christ is the leader, example and pattern of all who follow him, and they must follow in his steps, and be as he was. He taught his disciples that except a man deny himself, take up his cross and follow him, he cannot be his disciple. Self-denial is the sacrifice of self and of man's own will, and being made like Christ and as he was. So then to follow Christ is to have the mind of Christ, to be child-like and molded into the will and way of God, and to say, as our Master said, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the

Father.” “I can of mine own self do nothing: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” And while this work is manifested in us and by us, as the dear children of God who walk in love, and we work out this good work of salvation with fear and trembling, which the Lord hath begun in us, yet it will be in our hearts to ascribe to him the kingdom and the power and the glory, as did Christ and Paul, meekly saying, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Here is the enabling and moving power, and it is nothing less than the will and power of God prevailing in us, “of his good pleasure,” subverting our own will, turning us unto the Lord in the day of his power, constraining us in heart and spirit to submissively and meekly pray, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

Thus Jesus taught and felt. The will of God is absolute and supreme in heaven, and we here surrender that it shall be so done in us. We should not seek to be above the meek and lowly Master, but esteem it an honor to be as he was, and his prayer was, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt.” So then everyone in whom Christ is formed the hope of glory, must thus yield submission to the supreme will of God, for Paul says, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. {[Ga](#) 2:20}.” “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” This is true in everyone who is Christ’s. “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the Mesh with the affections and lusts.”

Thus clearly does the truth shine out, that in all the true worship and service of God by his children, their own will is surrendered, their fleshly powers are crucified, and the Spirit and life of the Lord Jesus moves and enables them and prevails in them; “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the

obedience of Christ,” says the humbled Paul. And so the Christian loses himself in Christ, or is hidden behind the cross of Christ, becomes as a cipher or naught, and Christ is all in all to him. Set down a thousand million ciphers, and they count as nothing, but let one be placed before them, when, lo, they are as a strong nation, an innumerable company. So, it is with Christ and “the general assembly and church of the first-born.” All life and authority might and dominion, wisdom and understanding, righteousness and sanctification, will and power, grace and glory, perfection and love, are in the Head, and descend from him to all the members of his body, the church, the bride. “And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.” God raised Christ from the dead, “and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.” So, the church is in Christ and is his fullness, and Christ is in the church and is her fullness. The church has the mind of Christ, says Paul. “So then with the mind I myself servo the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” It is thus with us all. The flesh is denied and crucified, and the mind and Spirit of Christ prevail in us, in the worship of God. “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” It is a very flesh-abasing and suffering experience to be led to thus worship God, and rejoice in Christ Jesus alone as our life and salvation.

One very solemn and wonderful truth more, in closing, as written by Paul, of the completion of Christ’s reign upon his Father’s throne, saying, “Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” This overwhelms me with awe and deep abasement, to be told that the all-conquering Son of the Highest, who “must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet,” “the King of kings, and Lord of lords,” shall then

himself deliver up the kingdom and the do minion and the throne to his and our Father and God, and again make himself of no reputation, be as one with his brethren, and himself he subject to God. O, may I then fall down at his sacred feet, and in lowest humility be as he is! O behold! and be humbled at the lowly condescension of the highly exalted and dear Son of God, that he shall himself be subject unto him that put all things under him. O, how much more should we ourselves be subject unto God, and unto his meek and lowly Son.

“That God may be all in all.” This shall be the end and crowning glory of all the dear and reigning Redeemer’s work. Entire or absolute subjection unto God, whose will and power are supreme, is the sublime doctrine and truth of the Bible, and the very crowning purpose and work unto which he sent his Son into the world, and has now seated him at his own right hand in power and glory. And shall we not, therefore, as followers of Christ, meekly and humbly surrender our own will and way, and esteem it our highest honor to “be subject unto him!” “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” All our self-will, opposition and enmity to the absolute dominion and reign of our God and his Christ, therefore, must be subdued and put down, for all authority and power must be put under his feet. “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth,” not only in heaven, but upon the earth, and all things shall be subdued unto him, and God shall be all in all.

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34 Good Works

Signs Of The Times
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GOOD WORKS

With your permission, beloved Editor, I feel moved to offer some thoughts to the household of faith upon good works, their nature, extent and use.

First. Their nature. Three things are essential to a good work. First, it must be done from a right principle; secondly, it must be performed according to a right rule; and thirdly, it must be directed into a right end. This principle is love; this rule is the divine command; and this end is the glory of God. These are the essential properties of every good work, and in the absence of either of them no work can be truly a good work, and therefore can not be pleasing in the sight of God; not acceptable to him. Let us consider them separately in their order.

First, Love. Every good work must be wrought in God, and must therefore spring from love; "for God is love." "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Therefore, "Love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." But "He that loveth not, knoweth not God." So love is the evidence that we have passed from death unto life; {[1Jo](#) 3:14}, and it is also the first fruit of the Spirit. {[Ga](#) 5:22} Hence the divine Master said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." Therefore, without the love of God it is impossible to keep his commandments; for "love is the fulfilling of the law." Now suppose a mere natural man, whose carnal mind (the only mind he has) is enmity against God, and whose heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, should

endeavor to do good works, it must be apparent to all that it would be impossible for his works to have their existence in love to God. How vain and absurd then, to call upon such to engage in a religious life and observe the commandments of Christ.

Secondly, The divine command. No work can be good, unless it has this holy sanction, and is performed according to this righteous rule. "If ye love me, keep MY commandments," says our only Law giver. This absolutely forbids us to keep the commandments of any other, while it lays us under binding and solemn obligations to keep, or strictly obey every commandment of his. "Teaching them (Christ's disciples) to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," (the apostles). So that not even the apostles themselves, though sitting upon thrones as princes and judges in the kingdom of Christ, are permitted to depart in the least from the "all things" commanded them by the adorable King of saints. How is it, then, that so many things are taught and observed professedly in the name of Christ, which are clearly outside of all things in the apostolic commission, as they who teach and observe them will themselves admit? The apostles have solemnly affirmed that "they gave them no such commandment." {[Ac](#) 15:24}.

The Lord Jesus himself decides the question, saying, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." All such vain oblations and dead works the Lord abhors and rejects as reprobate silver, saying, "Who hath required these things at your hands?" The commandments of Jesus are positive enactments; and where there is a positive law, it must be observed according to its provisions. Now suppose a true believer should have a little water sprinkled upon him, or be immersed by one who is outside of Christ's visible kingdom, and hence who has no authority according to the law of Christ's visible kingdom, and hence who has no authority according to the law of Christ to administer his ordinances; or suppose an unbeliever, who has not the love of God in his heart, should be "buried in baptism" by a true servant of Jesus,

and received into the gospel church; in either case the act cannot be a good work, because it would not have been performed according to the divine command.

Thirdly, The glory of God. This is the end of every good work. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do al to the glory of God." {[1Co](#) 10:31}. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so, shall ye be my disciples." {[Joh](#) 15:8}.

The apostle Paul shows that the end of our salvation in Christ is, that we should be "To the praise of the glory of God's grace." {[Eph](#) 1:1-6}. And the apostle Peter says, that God hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, "that we should show forth his praise."

Therefore, as to love God and delight in him is the chief good, so to glorify him is the highest and noblest end to which saints and angels can aim in all that they do. This is an aim worthy of the glorious God himself, for the manifestation of his glory is the design of God in all his glorious works, and especially in his most glorious work of salvation, as we have seen. Therefore, the royal psalmist says, "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee." {[Ps](#) 145:10}. Good works, therefore, have their foundation, existence and end in God, and he is their author, working in his children both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Hence a prophet of God's people says, "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us." {[Isa](#) 26:12}.

Now suppose a man is religious and engages in religious works, but with some other end than the glory of God in view, as, for instance, that he may escape hell and go to heaven; this is only a selfish aim, and his works cannot therefore be good.

Second, Their extent. Good works belong to the household of faith; for they cannot be produced in carnal nature's barren soil. They are

the fruits of the tree of life, but cannot be found upon the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Or, they are the fruits of the Spirit, and not the works of the flesh. {[Ga](#) 5:19-23}. Therefore, those only who are born of the Spirit can perform good works. "These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." {[Tit](#) 3:8}, Good works are defined in the scriptures to be the "work of faith and labor of love." {[1Th](#) 1:3; [Heb](#) 6:10}, and are therefore limited to those who believe in and love God. Hence the unbeliever, who is an enemy in his mind by wicked works, {[Col](#) 1:21}, has no part in good works, and cannot possibly participate in them or perform them.

"First make the tree good, and its fruit will be good," says Jesus, who was a perfect model of good works, and who asks, "How can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruits?" That is not a good work which is not done in obedience to a divine command; and that is no obedience which springs not from love; for attempted obedience without love must arise from selfish, servile fear, and is nothing but abject slavery. But true obedience is that of the heart, and is the filial service of a loving child. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love."

Third, Their use. "I will shew thee my faith by my works." {[Jas](#) 2:18}, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." {[Mt](#) 7:16}, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." {[Joh](#) 14:23}, "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." "These things are good and profitable unto men." {[Tit](#) 3:8,14}. "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into

the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." {[2Pe](#) 1:8-11}, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." {Revelations. 22:14}.

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." {[Joh](#) 15:10}, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." {[Heb](#) 6:10}, "Lord, my goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." {[Ps](#) 16:2-3}. "For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; while by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ." {[2Co](#) 9:12-13}.

Now these texts very clearly and connectedly show the use and importance of good works, without which we can neither receive to ourselves nor give to others the assurance of our calling and election. Good works are, therefore, the test of our character, the proof of our love, and the fruit of our vital union with Christ the living Vine. For this reason the Lord says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." (For,) "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." But, he says again, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." {[Mt](#) 25:34-36,40,45}.

Therefore, as that is no obedience which does not spring from love, so that it is not love which does not produce obedience; for if the former is only slavery, the latter is mere hypocrisy. Because the Lord

says, "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." {[Joh](#) 14:24}. For "This is love that we walk after his commandments." {[2Jo](#) 6}. "My little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but indeed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." "And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him." {[1Jo](#) 3:18-24}. How eminently useful, then, are good works! and how very important it is that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain them. For it is only in this way that they can glorify God. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." And it is in this way also that the body of Christ, the church, is edified. "Charity edifieth." {[1Co](#) 8:1}. "Follow after charity." {[1Co](#) 14:1}, "Let all things be done unto edifying." (Verse 26) "We do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying." {[2Co](#) 12:19}, "According to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." {[Eph](#) 4:16}.

Finally, we are elected "unto obedience," {[1Pe](#) 1:2}, and "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." {[Eph](#) 2:10}. Therefore, good works are to the believer in Jesus what good fruit is to the tree – the husbandman selects, plants and nurtures the tree, to the end that it may bear him good fruit. And that tree which bears much good fruit, brings more delight and honor to the husbandman, than the unfruitful tree. So Christ says, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he (the Husbandman) taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." {[Joh](#) 15:2}.

Therefore, with the apostle let us pray that God would "Make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which

is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." {[Heb](#) 13:21}.

I send this, brother Beebe, as I wrote it, without copying. It is imperfect, but I hope it may be useful in stirring up the pure minds of the dear saints. Yours in the good hope through grace.

Elder David Bartley

1869

35 The Fullness of the Divine Blessing #1

A Second Feast: pgs. 79-87

THE FULLNESS OF THE DIVINE BLESSING. #1

“BLESSED be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” – {[Eph](#) 1:3-7}.

Beloved In Christ: – The words of Scripture are right and true and wonderful, and none more wonderful in their all comprehensive fullness than this text, addressed to the saints at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ. In this one sentence almost every part of the doctrine of Christ and the fullness of salvation is included. Blessed with this wonderful revelation to his faith, Paul blessed God for what

he is in himself, and for his unspeakable gift and blessing to his chosen people, and mentions the chief of the infinite blessings. Let us follow the inspired apostle. Our blessed God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is as well our God and Father, in the sacred relationship that the Lord Jesus is ours, and ours in all that he is to God and in all that he does. At the conquered grave he said to Mary: "Go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." The night before the holy Son of God died on the cross, he prayed to God for his people, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." In the text Paul testifies how all this shall be accomplished. It is a blessed and sacred truth, then, that the God of his covenant people is as well their everlasting Father. Both these ever-enduring relations exist in our Lord Jesus Christ; for in him only are we the blessed people of God, and his beloved children. Every sacred and holy tie that binds and endears us to God is in his well-beloved Son. We cannot too well understand this fact, nor too humbly and gratefully cherish it, lest we forget and think of ourselves more highly than we ought. The holy child Jesus is the only begotten Son of God; therefore, our sonship to God and his Fatherhood to us is in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is in his life manifested in us that we are the children of God, and in his obedience only shall we be made righteous.

Let us observe that a right spirit and a true conception of God ever leads us to bless, adore and extol his holy name, and banishes the thought that would say, "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" The childlike, meek and true spirit will ever say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." The spirit of sonship is to thank the Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, for all that he is, and for all that he does, though he is sovereignly discriminating in hiding himself and the things of his kingdom from the wise and prudent, and revealing them unto babes. But the spirit of the flesh and of worldly wisdom is to cavil, object to and find fault with God,

because he is the Lord God Almighty, and does not conform to the will and ways and works of men.

“Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” What God doeth is forever. He changes not; but from eternity to eternity he is the same. “For the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.” That is, he does not turn from them or recall them. “For all the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yea, and amen, to the glory of God by us.” The blessing of God is done, is eternal and unchangeable. “Hath blessed us.” This is in the perfect tense. The people whom he hath thus blessed did nothing to move him thereunto, nothing to obtain his blessing; neither can they do anything to turn this blessing of God into a curse, or to cause him to change and revoke the blessing. It is positively unconditional on their part, and it is forever. The full measure of the divine blessing of our blessed God is, “all spiritual blessings.” This is infinite fullness, and riches of blessing. Nothing can be taken from it, nor anything added to it. It is unsearchable, incomprehensible, and as enduring as eternity. It is impossible to conceive of the smallest heavenly blessing outside of or more than “all spiritual blessing.” No enlightened mind will presume to say that our God has conditionally blessed us with any of the all spiritual blessings. For all the boundless fullness of this everlasting blessing of the Almighty Father is “in heavenly places in Christ.” Therefore, they are as sovereignly unfailing and free as is our Lord Jesus Christ himself. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Paul thus shows, for the assurance of our faith and hope in God, that as we had done, nothing to move him to deliver up his holy Son for us all, as his unspeakable gift to his people, so with him he will likewise freely give us all other blessings of his love and grace. It is written of Jesus, “And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.” And he says, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the

water of life freely. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Words could not more clearly and fully express the entire freeness of all spiritual blessings, the inexhaustible treasury of heavenly grace. All, all as freely and surely given to us as the blessed Son of the holy Father’s love. The infinite gift of his Son secured to us all things else, “all spiritual blessings.” They are all in Christ. The Father is in Christ. “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” So, the blessed Christ is the fullness of heaven. We are in Christ. The innumerable brotherhood of saints is in Christ. In Christ his God and Father hath blessed us. Christ is our wisdom and righteousness, our sanctification and redemption, our resurrection and our life. We have salvation only in Christ. “He shall save his people from their sins.” They have received of the Lord’s hand double for all their sins. The double is eternal redemption, and “all spiritual blessings in Christ.” The redeemed of the Lord shall go up into immortality and eternal glory, and find their Father and God, their heaven and blessed all in Christ. Blessed Christ! “Do not I love thee, O my Lord? Behold my heart and see, and turn each cursed idol out, that dares to rival thee.” If I make my salvation, either for time or eternity, depend upon myself, my obedience or works of righteousness which I have done, and expect any of the spiritual blessings of God for what I have done in his service, is not this an idol and a rival of Christ! For it is attributing some of the blessings and gifts of salvation to myself and my works, instead of to Christ and for his sake. Even when we have served the best we are enabled to do, our Lord teaches his disciples to say, “We are unprofitable servants.”

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” Paul said this of all the faithful in Christ, with the saints at Ephesus. They are all in Christ, and in him they are faithful, or have full faith in him, not in themselves; for in themselves they are not faithful. By the choice of God they are in Christ. God looked upon

them or viewed them in Christ even then, when he chose them in him, and vouchsafed to them all spiritual blessings, both for time and eternity. To the brotherhood in Christ Paul therefore says, “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” For we and all our blessings of salvation are in the Lord. We are blessed with them all, not only in Christ, but also according as God hath chosen us in him. So then, all the blessed of God and saved in Christ were in him by the choice of God before the foundation of the world. Not in him in their persons, but in him in their life, with all their spiritual blessings. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” “Your life is hid with Christ in God.” This life God gave us when he gave us his Son. Therefore, Christ is our life. “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” And he hath not any spiritual blessing. Our identity and being is in our life. This is true of all animal and human beings, as the creatures of the Creator; it is also true of us as the brethren of Christ and the children of God. The life and head of the church is Christ, and the life and head of Christ is God. Paul says, “All are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.”

All who live and believe in Christ, as their righteousness and salvation, have faith to understand that they are now the children of God in Christ Jesus, and only because Christ lives in them, their hope of glory, and they live in him. Without Christ, they would yet be dead in their sins, and without God in the world. Thus it is true that our sonship unto God was not in the life of Adam, nor is it now in our fleshly being as born of the flesh, but it was in the life of Christ, and is manifested in us as born of the Spirit of God. So as truly as Adam was and is our natural head and life, as the creatures of God, our Lord Jesus Christ was and is our spiritual head and life as the children of God. So, it’ is only because we are Christ’s, his

people and brethren, and Christ is ours, that we receive eternal life and all spiritual blessings, now in time and unto blissful eternity. God hath now revealed these blessed things unto us by his Spirit, and they are true in us who are full of faith in Christ Jesus, our head, our life, our salvation, our all in all. But all this that is true in us and blessed to us now in time, causing us to rejoice in Christ, was just as true with God before time was born, when he chose us and blessed us in Christ. Every believer in Christ in all time was both chosen in Christ and given all spiritual blessings in him before the foundation of the world. Christ and all spiritual blessings, to help them on earth and to crown them in heaven, are the gifts of God's eternal love to them. And every one of the countless millions of redeemed and saved sinners are the people and children of God's love. So, all spiritual blessings are the gifts of his love. They were unconditionally given us in Christ Jesus. Faith and hope and love in Christ, in whom we believe and rejoice, are to us now the Spirit's witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. These three now abide in us to whom they are given, and they are a precious foretaste of "all spiritual blessings," a three-fold chord that cannot be broken, and a sure promise of the full possession of the heavenly inheritance unto God in Christ, when time shall be no longer.

"That we should be holy and without blame before him in love." This is the blessed and holy purpose and end of God in his chosen people. They are a peculiar people, both to themselves and the world, a spectacle to men and to angels; for every one of them is a Shulamite, in whom is seen the company of two armies. For the children of God are partakers of flesh and blood, as well as partakers of the divine nature, and are those who are twice born or born again. The first birth is of the flesh, the last is of the Spirit. In the flesh they were unholy and condemned under the just and holy law of God, so that their salvation is according to the rich mercy and abounding grace of God in Christ Jesus alone. But as born again, born of God, they are freely justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and are the beloved children of God, his heirs and the joint-

heirs with Christ to the heavenly inheritance and all spiritual blessings. The eternal purpose of God regarded them as sinners, unholy, guilty and righteously condemned under the law of God; for he chose and blessed them in Jesus Christ the righteous unto the end that they should be cleansed from all unrighteousness, washed from all their sins, made spotless and holy, and perfected in the love of God and conformed to the image of his beloved and altogether lovely Son. The omnipotent power of the Father's everlasting love, graciously and sovereignly bestowed upon his chosen people in Christ, their Mediator and immortal Head, and shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, will thus purify all the sons of God and wholly sanctify them, until their whole spirit and soul and body shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall bring all his saints with him in glory and present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Chosen of God before time that they should be blessedly and divinely lovely as perfected in holiness, a choice supremely worthy of and glorifying to God in the highest, in due time he calls them with a holy calling, and they run after him, love him, because he first loved them, show forth his praise and find their supreme bliss in his loving service and praise. As new born babes, they desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby, having tasted that the Lord is gracious. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Behold, all the fullness of blessings in Christ Jesus are spiritual, all the chosen people of the Father's love are "a spiritual house," and all their offerings and devotions to the God of their salvation and worship, as "a holy priesthood," are "spiritual sacrifices," and all this spiritual house, and all their spiritual sacrifices offered up to God, are acceptable to him by our Lord Jesus Christ, our ever-living and glorious High Priest. All this glorious power of God in the

salvation of his chosen people “he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.”

How infinitely wonderful, glorious and blessed is all this! “My soul stands trembling, while she sings the honors of her God.” O the precious name of Jesus! Aged, afflicted, reproached, persecuted, poor, weak and helpless, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.” Yea, I rejoice that I am counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”

And now, my dearly beloved kindred in Christ, my earnest desire to God the loving and holy Father for you all is, “that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

In the faith and hope and love of Christ I am your brother companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,

D. BARTLEY.

Montgomery, Ala., Feb. 3, 1902.

36 Foreknowledge: Permission

Signs Of The Times
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FOREKNOWLEDGE: PERMISSION.

Beloved Editors And Brethren: – A reverential and scriptural inquiry into the revealed attributes and purposes of the eternal God, who is at once infinitely holy and wise and almighty, is commendable, and should glorify him in our view. Unto this end, therefore, let me kindly ask a serious consideration of these solemn things, always remembering when we speak of God, that “reverend and holy is his name.” That there exists a failure of a right understanding of the eternal and unchangeable perfections of the Almighty, is painfully evident from published Baptist writings, which should call for deep heart-searching’s, humility and supplications before the Lord, that he will mercifully turn unto his erring people a pure language, heal their backslidings, give them the humble and contrite spirit of holy awe before him, and cause them to ever feel and adoringly say, “Hallowed be thy name.” For then we should be spared the trial of seeing and hearing the shocking reproaches against the name of the Holy Lord God Almighty, because he is the Almighty Sovereign, the Controller of all things in the universe.

The foreknowledge of God is admitted by all kinds of Baptists, and many others who profess to believe in him. It is so evidently true of him who is infinitely perfect, that to deny it would be to charge ignorance and imperfection to the holy One, in whom are all the

infinite treasures of wisdom and knowledge and power. Therefore, as yet few among religious writers have the irreverence to do this. We know that the Bible abounds with inspired testimony to the everlasting foreknowledge of the unlimited God, who is omniscient and omnipresent, filling all eternity and time, “beholding the evil and the good,” with whom all things and times and beings ever were and are present. The holy book reveals him thus. There is no lack, no ignorance, no weakness, no failure in God. In wisdom and knowledge, holiness and power, he is the unlimited and infinite One, who inhabiteth and filleth eternity. Not the least thing in unlimited space, from eternity to eternity, was ever hidden from his all-seeing eye, but all things are naked and open unto him with whom we have to do. And while known unto God are all things from the beginning, so that his knowledge is limitless and eternal, so also are all his perfections, his attributes, his very essence and being, his counsel and “eternal purpose,” his justice and truth, his wisdom and holiness, “his eternal power and Godhead.” In all these God is as unlimited and perfect as in his boundless foreknowledge. To deny this is a denial of his infinite perfections and of the Bible. It is at once self-evident that any single perfection of the Almighty is no more infinitely perfect than every other perfection; therefore the wisdom and counsel, purpose and power, truth and holiness of our blessed God, are equally commensurate and extensive and limitless with his foreknowledge, so that there is not the least discrepancies, confusion, conflict or lack of infinite unity in any of the changeless perfections of the Godhead. “He is in one mind, and none can turn him, and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.” God is from everlasting to everlasting the same, and changes not. Anyone who would dispute this, and all this, would say, “There is no God.” But those who know God, and knowing him, revere and love him, will believe that he is thus perfect in all his attributes, and holy in all his way and work.

Then the foreknowledge of the Almighty is presided over by his perfect wisdom and counsel, and is harmonious with his infinite

purpose, and all this according to his omnipotent power and unto his eternal glory.

Either the power and wisdom and purpose of the Lord thus stand, and are the support of his foreknowledge, and he “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,” as inspiration declares, or else the wisdom and power of the Lord are less than his knowledge, and too deficient to control all things. For, admitting that the everlasting God is absolutely perfect in wisdom, and almighty in power, and foreknew all things, “Declaring the end from the beginning, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,” then it is certain that his counsel and purpose and power are equal to his foreknowledge of all things, and that he purposed them no less than he foreknew them. For his wisdom and power certainly would have prevented anything and everything which was not according to his infinite purpose. The text which says that the wrath of man shall surely praise the Lord, and the remainder of wrath he shalt restrain, proves this truth, which is also self-evident.

It is true, then, that with the Almighty there is no such thing as chance, but all things are known to him, and subjected to his counsel and purpose, power and control. He whose word of creative power spoke all things into existence, said of all things foreknown, Let it be so. His infinite and eternal purpose bounded and ran through all his foreknowledge of all things, any and all of which he had the power to prevent, but in his perfect wisdom he saw through it all to the end, to the last thing, the last enemy, which is death, the wages of sin, and he sovereignly determined that in all things his power should be made known, in subduing all under the feet of his Son, and that his name should be declared throughout all the earth, and God himself should be glorified in the highest in his holiness and power for ever and ever.

“Foreknowledge is an act of the infinite intelligence of God, knowing from all eternity, without change, the certain futurity of all events of every class whatsoever that ever will come to pass.”

“Foreordination is an act of the infinitely intelligent, foreknowing, righteous and benevolent will of God, from all eternity determining the certain futurity of all events of every class whatsoever that come to pass. Foreknowledge recognizes the certain futurity of events, while foreordination makes them certainly future.”

“Permission. The act of permitting or allowing; license or liberty granted; authorization; consent.”

These correct definitions are given in the accurate Standard Dictionary. They show the perfect concurrence between the foreknowledge and the foreordination of God, and that between these there is no collision, but harmony. And certainly, there is consistency and harmony, wisdom and counsel in all the purpose and acts of the perfect and holy Almighty, in whom there is no darkness at all.

But the word permission is believed to better qualify and guard the foreordination or predestination, decree or determination (which mean the same) of God, relating to his “eternal purpose” in all things foreknown to him. It is admitted that the all-wise and all-powerful Jehovah was pleased to permit all things to be just as he foreknew them, for he had the power to prevent them, but it was according to his counsel and purpose to let them take place. It is thought that the idea of God’s permissive decrees, or that he purposed in himself not to hinder or prevent anything from taking place which he foreknew, frees his predestination from censure, reproach and blame among men; that this view does not make his predestination of all things the responsible cause of all things, yet it admits that all things whatsoever come to pass are so certainly embraced in his permissive decree that with God there is no chance event.

Giving every advantage to this word that it is entitled to, yet to say that God foreordained to permit all things to come to pass, according to his eternal foreknowledge of them, equally establishes the certainty of all things, just as he foreknew them and consented to allow them to be. And since it is admitted that the permission of God suffers all things to take place, it must likewise be admitted that he forever purposed and determined to permit them to come to pass, for he is in one mind, and with him is not the shadow of turning. But to say that God consents to and permits all things to come to pass, yet to deny that he eternally predestinated or determined to permit them, is to impute change to the immutable One, which is not true of him. But if to escape this it should be held that the counsel, purpose and decree of the Lord do not extend to, include and control all things which are foreknown to him, then his sovereignty is impeached, his wisdom to compass and order all things, and his power to subdue and control them, are denied, and the consequence is involved that the counsel, purpose and power of the Lord God omnipotent are not equal to his knowledge, which is terribly dishonoring and untrue. Surely none who truly believe that God is, will also hold that there is either antagonism or inequality between the foreknowledge and foreordination of God, or between any of all his eternal perfections, nor affirm that his permission of all things is without his “eternal purpose “that thus should all things come to pass even as he foreknew them. For unless the infinitely wise and omnipotent Lord God of the holy prophets had eternally purposed and determined to let all things come to pass, according to his immutable counsel, just as embraced in his infallible foreknowledge of them, they could not possibly exist and take place, because his wisdom and power would have ordered otherwise and prevented them. Therefore, his word says, “Who saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not!” “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world

stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught; he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.” – {[Ps](#) 33}. This inspired and precious testimony proves all that has here been said of the infinite and holy perfections of the Most High, whose wisdom directs and whose power controls all worlds and all things.

Now, though the permissive predestination of all things be insisted upon, yet the predestination of all things in any sense whatever, makes all things absolutely certain, because everything that God has at all foreordained or determined is thereby made infallibly sure. If this be denied, then the Lord himself is virtually charged with fallibility and weakness, and that many things which come to pass are entirely beyond the counsel and purpose and power of the Almighty. But the holy Bible fully reveals the omnipotence, sovereignty and dominion of the Lord over all beings and things in all places. Therefore, with him there is no such thing as accident and chance, nor the least frustration, disappointment, turning about, and never an effort. “I blessed the Most High; and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”

The fact that God has determined anything whatever that comes to pass, does not necessarily make him the actor or doer of all things before determined by him, neither is he the responsible author of

any wicked act or sinful thing. Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim's. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. His people should reverently ever say the same, and will when they see him sitting upon his high throne, nor presume in their littleness and weakness to cavil at his infinite sovereignty, but adore the majesty of his power. Jesus said, "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!" "And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me." "Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." To Peter he said again, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it!" Of the death of Christ on the cross, Peter said that we were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you," &c. The apostles "lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is. " The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." All these words of the betrayed Lamb of God and his inspired apostles, most positively prove that the acts of those wicked men, in the betrayal and death of the holy Son of God, were by him before determined, according as God foreordained before the foundation of the world. Yet this was the most astounding and wicked crime of all time, and God upon his holy throne has so judged it, and visited his righteous and awful judgments upon its guilty perpetrators. How base and horrible would be the imputation of all this great wickedness and

chiefest of all crimes to the holy throne of heaven and earth! May God in his rich mercy forgive such an abhorrent thought against his infinite holiness and majesty. While he before determined that Judas should betray his holy and darling Son and Lamb, whom he verily foreordained to die on the Roman cross, for the redemption of his foreordained people, and his hand and his counsel before determined whatsoever was done by the earthly kings and rulers, the high priest, Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the Jews, yet they were impelled only by their own wicked hearts and Satan in doing all this monstrous crime; for God did not incite nor prompt their wickedness, neither did his ordained and holy purpose influence or cause them to betray and crucify the Lamb of God. And this is equally true in every other species of sin and all wicked works, for they neither emanate from the holy Lord God Almighty, nor are they influenced at all by his “eternal purpose “in ordaining them. The unlimited foreknowledge of God, beyond which not the least thing can ever possibly take place, just as unfailingly establishes the absolute certainty of all things, in all places of his universal dominion, as does his before determined purpose concerning all things, known as predestination or foreordination. Therefore, all the objections and replies which are made against the foreordination of God, as embracing and controlling all things, may also be made against the foreknowledge of God, which equally bounds and controls all things. If this is denied, then the foreknowledge of God as including all things is also denied; for if anything may either be or not be, it is not foreknown, but a mere chance event. The admission of this denies the perfection of God’s knowledge, and at once imputes ignorance to him.

Of the universal and unlimited knowledge of God, the Scriptures plainly testify, as in the following texts: “Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.” “God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.” “Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men.” “Now we are sure that thou knowest all things.” “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.” “He

that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.” “O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.” How all this truth should both humble and comfort us. “Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee: but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” From eternity to eternity the Most High was thus infinite in knowledge, as in goodness and wisdom and power. O fear him, ye saints. We have seen that all the perfections of God are coextensive with his eternal knowledge, and run parallel with it, and cannot conflict with it. And so Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said of Christ, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” They did this wickedly, and were the betrayers and murderers of the Lord of life and glory, and they alone were the guilty and responsible authors and doers of this crime of crimes. But we are told by the Holy Spirit that in all this most momentous event of the world, the determined counsel of the holy One united with his foreknowledge in delivering his lamb-like Son into their wicked hands. And the words of wisdom and truth place the determinate counsel of God before his foreknowledge. This is their true order, therefore, and it reveals the wisdom of the Lord in making his foreknowledge harmonious with and subservient to his foreordination, or his “determinate counsel,” according to which all things are determined, and cannot be overthrown. For if they could be, then not his foreknowledge only, but his dominion, sovereignty, counsel, power and throne as well might be overthrown. But almighty majesty and eternal power belong to the infinitely wise and holy and blessed God, whose arm rules for him, and “who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” His foreknowledge includes all things, and according to the counsel of his own will he

worketh all things; and so his counsel and unchangeable will or “eternal purpose “are as extensive and limitless as his eternal knowledge, and all are unfailingly established and upheld by “his eternal power and Godhead.” The clause, “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,” affirms that God directs, determines and controls all things according to his counsel and the purpose of his sovereign will. And the word “worketh,” makes it evident that the Almighty actively and sovereignly governs and controls all things. O thou infinite and blessed majesty! who that knoweth thy power and glory would not stand in awe of thee, and devoutly adore and worship thee? “Lord, thou has been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

O, brethren, that we might all meekly and reverently ascribe all power and holiness unto the Most High. God is in! heaven; we are upon the earth. We should never reply against God, nor charge unrighteousness to him. His holiness is as supreme as his omnipotence “His kingdom ruleth overall.” “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” Let us trust in his power, and rejoice in his goodness. He is the God of salvation, the Savior of all who love him. O, who that knows anything of his power and holiness and glory, would not supremely love and praise him? “Bless the Lord, O my soul.” “The Lord shall reign forever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord.” “Grace be with you all. Amen.”

D. BARTLEY.

Crawfordsville, Ind., July 13, 1901.

38 Exhortation

Signs Of The Times
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EXHORTATION.

“I Charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their oars from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” – {2Ti 4:1-4}.

In the gospel of Christ, which is “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth,” exhortation occupies an important and large place; therefore let us consider it in the light of revelation, meekly and prayerfully. To do so understandingly and profitably, and to the glory of “Christ, we should see the scriptural relation and place of exhortation in the gospel of salvation, that we may neither undervalue nor overvalue it, and that we may see the need and true use of it. The text plainly reveals the need and use or purpose of exhortation with all long-suffering and doctrine or teaching. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. “It was for this cause that Paul thus solemnly charged Timothy, and further commanded him: “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” For all this was needful, because the time would come when they would not endure sound doctrine; and from them Timothy should suffer afflictions and reproaches. That time soon came, and it has ever been coming.

“They” who would not endure sound doctrine, but should “turn away their ears from the truth,” were the professed disciples of Christ, who had itching ears for something more than “the word” and “sound doctrine,” and desired “some new thing,” something philosophical and pleasing to the mind and reason of men, as taught and accepted by scholars and doctors of theology, but called “fables” by Paul, who says that “God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world.”

The text shows that the first and most important part in fulfilling the gospel ministry is to “Preach the word.” This is the foundation of all exhortation in the gospel. And so Paul was “determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” And Peter says, “But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” Thus, did he preach the first gospel sermon after the ascension of the risen Christ, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost; for he preached Christ, and him crucified, and risen from the dead, the only Savior. And not until the people heard the word, and cried out, “What shall we do!” were they either commanded or exhorted to do anything; but then “did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” That is, having “gladly received the word” preached, he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, in whom they believed, and thus separate themselves from the impenitent and unbelieving generation of the Jews. So the text shows the same order later on in the gospel, when Timothy should preach the word; reprove, rebuke and exhort, for the purpose stated. Therefore the faithful preaching of the word of truth, with gospel exhortation, is the Lord’s ordained way of calling out and separating his believing followers from the unbelieving world, and of maintaining the true church and the truth as it is in Christ. The recorded words of Jesus clearly establish this fact, and it is fully confirmed by the inspired writings of his chosen apostles.

Let us then turn to their testimony, that we may see the relation of exhortation to the fundamental troth of the gospel of salvation, for there is a divine unity and harmony in the New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and this is carried out in the gospel of his grace, as one complete and perfect system of divine truth and salvation, to the praise and glory of God in his Son Jesus Christ. And so, the word says, “And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.” This tells it all. Let us pause here, and dwell a little on this wonderful revelation, for our instruction and reproof, exhortation and comfort. It was John the Baptist that bore this testimony of Jesus, of whom he said, “He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.” And so Jesus was before Moses, and the prophets, and the apostles, and all the ministry and church; therefore the words, “And of his fullness have all we received,” apply to all these, to all the children and servants of God, and they clearly show that “all we” have received only of the fullness of Christ, and not all his fullness, but only “of his fullness.” This fullness of which all we have received certainly includes all the fullness of the gospel, all the spiritual and ministerial gifts and qualifications as the members of Christ and of his gospel church, for all this is in him and of him. Hence, we have nothing whatever pertaining to the gospel of salvation outside “of his fullness.” And not only so, but it is just as true that all the gospel fullness of blessing and salvation that all we have received, is “grace for grace.” Not grace for work, but “for grace;” that is, because of grace given us in Christ Jesus we receive grace. This then is the only gospel principle upon which “all we” receive “all spiritual blessings,” and “every good gift and every perfect gift;” for God the Father gives them; they are all of Christ’s fullness, “and grace for grace.”

Now it will be well for us to see how this gospel doctrine and truth is carried out in the ministration of the gospel of grace, and in the churches of the saints, by the inspired apostles of the Lord Jesus, who have set in their proper place and order the things that pertain to the kingdom of God. In the epistle to the saints at Rome, Paul first

very fully shows the awful guilt and condemnation of all the children of the flesh, by the disobedience of the first man, and the consequent dominion or reign of sin unto death over all the race of man, which is unconditional and absolute. He then presents the perfect obedience of Christ, the second Man, and his everlasting righteousness, as the Head of the new covenant, showing that by his obedience shall his many people be made righteous; that unto them and in them shall grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Of Christ and us he says, “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” One surely follows the other, as cause and effect. “For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is the doctrine of Christ and his reigning and saving grace, the doctrine of the gospel, the sure foundation of salvation unto eternal glory, upon which the church and the ordinances of the gospel rest. Upon this doctrine of grace reigning by our Lord Jesus Christ, and much more abounding, where sin abounded, reigning in the hearts of all who are dead with Christ unto sin, reigning through righteousness unto eternal life, – upon this doctrine of Christ is based all gospel ordinances, commandments and exhortations unto the obedience of faith and love in the gospel kingdom. “Our beloved brother Paul,” therefore, goes right on and exhorts, saying, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” What is the constraining incentive thus to do? Hear Paul tell us, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace? What then, shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.” This is the sentiment of grace, and this its effect. What a blessed foundation is this grace to base all gospel exhortation upon, for grace secures its subjects from the

dominion of sin; it qualifies them to live righteously and godly in the world, to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things, and it is sufficient for them in their weakness to support them against the buffetings of the wicked one. There is no other foundation-principle to build gospel exhortation upon than the doctrine of God's grace that bringeth salvation; for the gospel kingdom is the kingdom of grace, and the children of the kingdom are under grace, and in this kingdom grace is the only power that reigns, for grace has no rival. The law of works has no place here, for the people of grace are not under the law; therefore exhortation in the kingdom of Christ, by whom grace reigns, cannot be upon any legal principle, which is necessarily conditional, and therefore defective and attended with failure. Not so with grace, the governing principle in the new covenant, which is unconditional, is rich in mercy, full of grace and truth, has Jesus, not Moses, for its Mediator, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" and this new and better testament is ministered by the Spirit of the living and true God, who says of the people of the covenant, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Nothing doubtful, contingent "upon ourselves," conditional, uncertain here, for all the promises of God in Jesus Christ are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us, declares Paul. O, what a blessed ground of assurance is here furnished us in the gospel of the new covenant to build all exhortation upon unto the obedience of faith, and the work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in Christ Jesus! For thus furnished and supported, in the full assurance of faith and hope, we can with comfort take up Paul's cheering exhortation and say, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Now then it is evident that all gospel obligations flow from grace, and partake of the nature of grace; therefore every gospel exhortation is of grace, and grace gives it its force and sanction, for

the gospel itself is “the gospel of the grace of God,” so termed by Paul, so all that the gospel is, all that belongs to it, is of grace; its faith and hope and love; its ordinances and commandments and exhortations; its ministration and obedience and good works; its promises and salvation and blessing – all, all are of grace, for all the fullness of the gospel of Christ is the free, unmerited, unbought bestowment and gracious gift of the “God of all grace and comfort.” “To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” All this goes before, and is the groundwork of the exhortation which follows: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” – {[2Pe 1](#)} In {[Ga 5](#)}. Paul shows that these Christian virtues and graces are the fruit of the Spirit; not the works of the flesh, but their opposite. And he there says, “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” Paul therefore prayed to the Father for the brethren, “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” – {[Eph 3](#)}. This has no reference to the power of the Holy Spirit in the impartation of spiritual life in Christ Jesus, but

to the needed ministration of daily bread and strength, that the brethren might be enabled through the Lord's sufficient grace to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called "of God, and to fulfill the work of faith in love. And so Paul said to another gospel church, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." – {[Php](#) 1}. And to still another church Paul says, "We [Paul and Timothy] give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth. " For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." {[Col](#) 1}.

Let us now pause, and behold how continually dependent are the saints in Christ upon the Father and Son and Spirit for spiritual understanding, wisdom and strength, both to prepare and enable them to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," and to be "fruitful in every good work." And here we are taught, too, the great and continual necessity that is upon us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Yea, also, here we have strong encouragement to come to this heavenly throne. The precious Scriptures quoted point us to the blessed and only source of mercy and grace, knowledge

and ability, fitness and acceptance, faith and love, that we may walk obediently as the dear children of God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is most evident, therefore, that all gospel commandments, exhortations, admonitions and reproofs have their source and strength in the continual supply of the Spirit and grace of God in the heart, and that every obedient act of faith in Christ Jesus is wrought only through this supply, and is the fruit thereof. No truth is more clearly and fully revealed in the holy Scriptures than this. This is God's most gracious work, and his blessed truth. Underlying and giving authority and efficacy to all commandment and exhortation in the gospel to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," is the all-sufficient cause; "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." So then at all times whenever we have the will and the power to thus obey, God gives both to us, and he "worketh" in us. Paul's true testimony is, "Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." He therefore says, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." All this is true of all others, in whom Christ lives. "Christ is our life." All the fruits of righteousness in us are by him, unto the praise and glory of God. This is a sure foundation for all gospel obedience, and all good works, and for all commandments and exhortations thereunto, for herein (in Zion) "the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." The Lord said of Zion, "All my springs are in thee." Both the pure river of water of life and the tree of life are in the Zion of God, and all the streams of salvation flow from the river of life. The Lord gives both grace and glory, and he freely gives them. "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Thus it is positively established that all the bestowments of rewards and blessings in the kingdom of grace are not rewards of debt or for service, but of grace; for all service and obedience have their source in abounding grace, and flow out freely from the heart in which grace reigns; therefore to grace is all the praise due. It should not be thought, then, that any divine blessing in Zion, any comfort or joy of salvation, is a conditional reward,

dependent upon our obedience to the Lord, for then “the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” Grace itself is not conditional, but free, and it “much more abounds “than sin; therefore, all the rewards and blessings of grace are both unconditional and free, like grace itself, for they are of grace. This applies to all gospel salvation; yea, it applies to all service in the gospel, all its ministration, its exhortation unto good works, and its obedience of faith in Christ Jesus; for the gospel itself, and all that the gospel means and is, is “the gospel of the grace of God.” So, but for grace there would be no gospel of salvation, no gospel exhortation and service, no comfort of love, no joy of salvation, no reward of grace. Hence, as obedient servants of the Lord, in the fulfillment of all gospel service, we ourselves are entirely dependent upon the “sufficient” grace of Christ, “the grace of God that bringeth salvation.” For this cause Paul says, “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” This is equally true of all gospel labor in the service of the Lord, therefore every subject of grace would do well to disclaim any sufficiency of his own to perform any conditions of salvation, and thus to obtain any reward, but be lowly enough to confess with Paul, It was not I that did the service and labored, “but the grace of God which was with me.” Were all thus like Paul, the effect would be unity, quietness and peace, and each would meekly endeavor to be “to the praise of the glory of God’s grace.” “A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” Contention would then cease about this, and that, and the other salvation; one by grace, others of works; one unconditional, others conditional; one dependent upon the Lord, others dependent upon ourselves; for all the saved in Christ Jesus would then happily unite in thankfully ascribing all salvation from all sin, and from all the sinfulness and weakness of the flesh, and unto all loving obedience in the faith of Christ, to God and his grace. Unto this end is all exhortation unto gospel obedience directed in the

New Testament, wherein exhortation abounds, under which blessed obligations of loving service grace has brought the dear children of God; therefore the holy and blessed obligations of unmerited grace should not be prostituted to selfish aims and ends by degrading them to the principle of conditions of salvation, by doing which we obtain many salvations in time as conditional rewards. For this is both selfish and legal in its nature, and is antagonistic to grace, and a reproach upon it, and as different from grace as law is from gospel, or Adam from Christ, or flesh from Spirit.

“This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. And he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shouting’s, crying, Grace, grace unto it.”

D. BARTLEY.

CRAWFORDSVILLE, Ind.

39 The Eternal Purpose

Signs Of The Times
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“THE ETERNAL PURPOSE.”

Beloved Brethren In Christ: – The only true God is the God of purpose, as he has so fully revealed in the Scriptures, and it is impressed upon me to write to you upon this sublime theme, in humble dependence upon him.

Text: “The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.” – {[Isa](#) 14:24}. Now, the fulfillment of this solemn oath of Jehovah depends upon his attributes of omniscience, omnipotence and immutability, all of which are fully declared in his sacred oracles, and to deny these absolute attributes is to deny his Godhead, which is open infidelity. The Almighty cannot be limited in any attribute or perfection of his divine nature or Being, but he is infinite in them all, as abundantly revealed in the Holy Bible. His omniscience includes absolute knowledge of all things and infinite wisdom; his omnipotence includes universal authority and dominion and almighty power; and his immutability includes his “eternal purpose,” and crowns him with eternity. These are self-evident truths, and no believer in God will have the presumption to deny them. “With God is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,” says the Scripture. This is not true of any other being. Therefore, if angel or man had “sworn,” as in the text, it might fail to come to pass, or stand, as is true in the purposes of the best men. “I am the Lord, (Jehovah) I change not,” is the voice of the Almighty. This makes it evident that there is nothing new and nothing old with him; that all creatures, things and events are ever present before him and known unto him, from everlasting to everlasting, as the Scriptures fully declare. The four and twenty elders cast their crowns before his holy throne, saying, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” – {Revelations. 4: 11}. The Lord’s dominion is universal and unlimited, then, and his government and control is over all things, because he alone is the Creator and supreme Ruler of all worlds and things, and they are all known unto him and subject to his omnipotent power. “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” – {[Col](#) 1:16-17}.

Now then, it is most clear that “the only blessed God,” is not only the God of purpose, but that his purpose is eternal, like himself, and that his “eternal purpose “is at once immutable or cannot change, and it extends to and embraces all things which he has created. For God did not create anything in vain, or without a wise purpose. To say he did, is to impeach his wisdom and deny his Godhead; and to say that his eternal purpose does not include all things that exist, is to both deny and frustrate his purpose, and to disappoint him and overthrow his government and control of all things, or dethrone and un-deify him. Or to say that God has more than one purpose, involves the same awful consequence; for to impute purposes to him, is to say that he has changed his purpose, just as imperfect men change from one purpose to other purposes; therefore there cannot be an eternal purpose with any creature. This infinite perfection belongs to God only, “whose name alone is Jehovah,” whose thought is one, and his purpose one, reaching from everlasting to everlasting, extending to all things in heaven and in earth, who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast, This is the God of the Bible, the Creator of all things, the God of “the eternal purpose,” and the Bible declares this of him. “The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.”

Purpose means, a fixed determination to do or attain an end or object; to intend, resolve, design, as the eternal purpose of God. – Standard Dictionary. Hence, every intelligent being has a purpose in all things he does, or in everything subject to his control, or else folly would be charged to him. Outside of purpose, then, there could be nothing but blind fate, or uncertain chance in the universe, and this would be ruinous and destructive. How good and excellent, therefore, that the Lord of hosts, in his infinite compassion to his people, “hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.” In his thought and purpose there is an absolute certainty, and according thereto everything shall so come to pass and stand. If not so, then

both his wisdom and power would be at fault and fail, and he would be disappointed and defeated. What a dreadful consequence! From this every rational mind must shrink with horror. For then it would be as “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”

But one thing now remains to be known: Is there any creature and event and thing in all the universe beyond and outside of the thought and purpose of God? To say there is, at once limits the omnipresent One, and wrests the crown of universal dominion and sovereignty from him. It is worse than folly to limit his thought and purpose, therefore, because it denies his infiniteness and eternity, and puts a limit upon his omniscience and omnipotence and omnipresence. These are the essential attributes of his essence and nature or being and Godhead, and to deny them is to deny God. Holy Scripture abounds with testimony to all these perfections of our holy God, and they also show that in these very perfections of the everlasting and unlimited and unchangeable Almighty Father, is the security and salvation and blessedness of all his chosen, called and justified people.

“I am God, and there is none else: I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country; Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it. Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; It shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.” – {[Isa](#) 46:9-13}. The execution of this purpose of God included the awful calamity of war and the overthrow of a powerful nation, by other nations. All this was true also of the long bondage of Israel in Egypt, the final destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, and of the warring nations in the wilderness and in the land of Canaan; for God had purposed and foretold all those awful

calamities and righteous judgments, concerning the afflictions and deliverance of Israel his people.

Now, as to the thought and purpose of God in the text, if the kind reader will please read both the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Isaiah, that he may see the entire connection of the text, it will be understood that this was determined in regard to the utter downfall of Babylon, and the deliverance of the children of Israel from their long captivity in Babylon, of which the prophet herein gives a grand and awful history. “The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. “ Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. “ For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and Son, and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts. The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him underfoot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? Who can read all these solemn declarations of the Lord of hosts, and then say that his purpose does not cover the whole universe, and extend to all nations, peoples and things! Why, all history is but a fulfillment of the word of the Lord by his inspired prophets, as the text and context and the whole Bible show; and the counsel, thought and purpose of the Lord of hosts run through it all, and chain every event to his eternal throne, so that nothing can frustrate his counsel and thought, or

overthrow and defeat his “eternal purpose.” We should be glad and rejoice that it is so, my dear brethren, for herein (in the eternal God) is our refuge and strength, and our everlasting safety. It was this divine assurance that enabled Paul to say, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” For Paul had been made to understand that God, “who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were,” had, “according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord,” ordained his people unto eternal life, through the redemption that is in him; and he therefore says, “In whom we also have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated [foreordained] according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” – {[Eph](#) 1:11}. Paul again says of God, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace; which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” – {[2Ti](#) 1:9}. All this Scripture testimony, and much more, clearly establish the fact that the foreknown and foreordained people of God in all ages and places are connected with the nations of the earth, and history of the world, and with all things in time, either directly or indirectly; that therefore, “for the elect’s sake,” he “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,” and for” the ultimate good of “the called according to his purpose.” Thus, it is shown in the divine record that the counsel, thought and purpose of the Lord of hosts comprehends, reaches to and controls all nations, creatures and things, and fixes limits and bounds to them, which they cannot pass. For this cause the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church, nor any creature separate his people from his love in Christ. Knowing this, David said to God, “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain.” It requires omniscience, omnipotence and “eternal purpose” to accomplish all this, but our God has these and is this, for he is God alone, the Almighty. “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For

I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. “ There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, [Israel] who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone. “ Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord.” These wonderful words did God declare to his people by his servant Moses. But the Lord again says, “Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.” – {[Isa 54:15-17](#)}. O Lord, thou Most High, my spirit rejoices in thee for this, and I adore thy Majesty, power and glory; for thou canst do all things, and cause me to triumph in thy might and salvation. Glory be unto thy holy name. The Lord’s own declaration here to his people is, first, that he has created the smith, the fire, and the waster to destroy; and, second, that, according to his unchanging purpose, he has laid his restraining hand upon every weapon of destruction, and has put a bridle upon every accusing tongue, so that wicked men, warring nations, persecuting foes, false friends and raving devils are firmly held in and controlled by his almighty hand of power. It is in this fact alone, my brethren, that Job did not curse God, perish in his affliction, and die; that the hosts of Israel did not perish in Egypt, nor in the Red Sea, nor in the terrible wilderness, nor at the fiery Sinai, nor in cruel Babylon; that neither the fiery furnace nor the den of lions could destroy the tried servants of God who were thrown in them, but did devour their enemies. It was for this cause that Joseph (type of Jesus) did not perish in the pit, nor in the prison; that his father’s house (the people of the covenant, according to the purpose of God,) did not perish by the famine; “For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it! and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?” Omniscience

directs his purpose in all things unto eternal ages, and Omnipotence executes his unlimited, “eternal purpose,” so there is never a failure – “So shall it stand.” O, brethren, let us trust in the Lord of hosts, and give him the glory due to his name. It is the most awful presumption for a poor creature, sin (?) to prescribe (?) and set (?) for the eternal one, “the only wise God,” or to try to beg the question, apologize and make excuses for him, of whom Jesus said, “There is none good, but one, that is God.” For a sinful man, therefore, to be so puffed up in his vain and fleshly mind as to assert that he is both wiser and better than the Holy One, is very wickedness and a dreadful sin. Therefore, every one should put his shoes off his feet when he treads upon this holy ground, and speaks of God, for deep reverence and lowly humility should fill us with solemn awe, and we should say, with the meek Moses, “I exceedingly fear and tremble.” It is exceedingly presuming and shocking when any poor mortal, whose very breath God gives him, will flippantly fly in the face of the Lord God Omnipotent, whose name is holiness, deny his very perfections and essential attributes, by limiting him by the finite line of his own little mind, and say, if God goes beyond or does more than this, he would be unjust, rob his creature man of his accountability, and himself be the author or perpetrator of all the sin and wickedness in his universe. This is the most revolting and blasphemous folly, than which the blatant and disgusting Ingersol has not uttered worse, and God will rebuke it. He said to Job, “Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him! he that reproveth God, let him answer it. “Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous!” – See {[Job](#) 40}.

“And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him [Moses] there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” {[Ex](#) 34:5-7}. Thus, does our holy and blessed God declare that he will maintain

the purity and righteousness of his own “great white throne,” and that his holiness will vindicate his judgments and his mercy.

Now, let us a little further consider the unfailing purpose of God. “The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.” – {[Isa](#) 23:9}. Having purposed this, he will certainly bring it to pass; “and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble.” – {[Mal](#) 4:1}. “For every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant.” – {[Jer](#) 51:29}. This is also true of the purpose of the Lord as it regards all lauds and peoples and nations and kingdoms of the world, as declared above, “to stain the pride of all glory.” “And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” – {[Da](#) 4:35}. For the Lord had sent Daniel the prophet to declare his purpose to the proud king, to whom he said, “This is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king: That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” We, as well as this king, should know this, and give honor and glory to God, as he then did. “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. “The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter.” – {[Da](#) 2:44-45}. These are most wonderful declarations, spoken with absolute certainty, and they clearly show the immutable purpose of God, not only as it regards his own kingdom and people, but also concerning “all these kingdoms,” which should be broken in pieces and destroyed, as a potter’s vessel is dashed in pieces, and

his people should be separated from the kingdoms of the world. In this the infinite purpose and omnipotent power of God are made known. All came to pass, just as decreed and foretold. There is a positiveness in the purpose of the Lord of hosts which will not admit of contingency or conditions; therefore, “the kingdom shall not be left to other people.” It is folly, then, to try to bring “other people” into the kingdom. The kingdoms that should be broken in pieces are no more, but the people of the Most High were gathered out of them by his own right hand, and his kingdom still stands, as the house built on the rock, and it is given to his saints. And now, because his people are to be redeemed “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,” among whom they are scattered as sheep gone astray, therefore “the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth,” reaches also to “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,” under heaven, as certainly as it did to Egypt, and Babylon, and Persia, and Asia, and Home, and all the ancient kingdoms which the Lord of hosts judged, punished and overthrew. For some of his people are connected in some sense to all the peoples and events and kingdoms of the earth; therefore the inheritance of the saints in Christ is “according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” If it were not thus, but the purpose and counsel of the Lord were limited, then his decree and control would also be limited to the extent of his purpose and counsel, because his controlling power cannot go beyond his purpose and act without purpose, and there could be no security or safety for his people, who are surrounded by “all things,” not merely by all good things, but often by the worst things. Read of the dreadful things, dangers and perils by land and sea, which Paul recounts that he was in, out of which the Lord delivered him. Surely the counsel and purpose of God extended to all these things, and equally, therefore, to all other things; for the God of purpose does not put forth his hand of power without any design or counsel or purpose. A fool might do so, but not the only wise God our Savior.” Among the many all things which are subjected to the purpose or decree of God, “who worketh all things after the counsel of his own

will,” Paul names “tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword; death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, nor any other creature.” Many of these things are the most terrible, and all “who are the called according to his purpose,” certainly have to encounter some of these all things, as did Paul and thousands of his martyred brethren, and all the called of God have to antagonize a sinful life, and the monster death. If the purpose and decree of God had not included all these direful things, and destroyed them, then they must have destroyed all his foreordained people. But how could his people be ordained to eternal life, and yet these destructive things not also be ordained to be put under their feet and destroyed? For the almighty power of our God is never exerted only according to his “eternal purpose,” and his purpose places an absolute limit upon sin and death and all other things, as positively as does his ordination or decree; for nothing whatever can take place outside of the infinite foreknowledge of God, and his immutable and “eternal purpose” is certainly as unlimited as is his foreknowledge. To say it is not, is to put some things outside of God’s wisdom, counsel and purpose, and so outside of or beyond his power and control, unless it is said that he controls some things without any purpose, which is to charge him with weakness and folly. In fact, a denial of the unlimited purpose of God, is to deny his unlimited foreknowledge, which is equal to a denial of his perfections or infinite fullness and changeless attributes. The purpose of God, then, is defined by his infinite wisdom, and both run parallel with his prescience or foreknowledge of all things, and all three are sanctified by his absolute holiness, and sustained by his omnipotent and eternal power and Godhead.

A reverential and solemn awe has possessed my spirit while I have thus written upon these most sublime realities, for such they are, and I verily realize that the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and moved me to thus write. It will glorify God, therefore, and he will sanctify it to his humble children, who have grace whereby they serve him with reverence and godly fear. In this divine assurance it is sent forth to

all to whom it may come, with the prayer that all may speak and write of the God of all goodness and holiness and power with the sacred reverence and honor that should characterize all who believe in God and worship him.

It will not be long, dear brethren, till many of us shall enter into that within the veil, and appear in the holy presence of God; so we should no more presume to speak a word against his infinite perfections now, nor criticize his acts, than we would then. This sorrowful admonition is needful, and it is given in love.

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace.”

D. BARTLEY.

Crawfordsville, Ind., July 11, 1899.

40 The Election of Grace

Signs Of The Times
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THE ELECTION OF GRACE.

Beloved In Christ: – We are called upon to look to the Rock from whence we were hewn, as well as to the hole of the pit from whence we were digged, showing that we are from both earth and heaven. So, the song of the redeemed is, “He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a Rock, and established my goings.” Christ is this living and everlasting Rock, and upon this abiding foundation stone the Lord Jehovah builds his

church. “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.” The apostle goes on and says. “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” – {[1Pe 2](#)}. These Scriptures not only clearly show that Christ and all his members are the chosen of God, but they also beautifully present the purpose and wisdom and goodness of the infinite Father in election; that the chosen generation should not be confounded, but should show forth his praise. Therefore, whenever any people truly praise the Holy One in Sion, it is only because he hath chosen them unto holiness and salvation; for the high praises from the saints is the blessed purpose of God in their election, and the glorious end of their salvation. This is worthy of the glorious and blessed God.

In the brief text which I have chosen for this paper, the chosen and inspired Paul declares a wonderful truth of God, namely, that election is of grace, and is the grace of God. Let us hear him: “But what saith the answer of God unto him [Elijah]? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” – {[Ro 11:4-5](#)}. A remnant of the people of Israel who truly worshiped God, but refused to bow down to idols, in the time of the apostles, as also in the times of the prophets. The apostle goes on and says, “And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” Works, then, are excluded from salvation, for it is “the election of grace” only that hath obtained salvation, and both the election and grace are of God. Paul, therefore, continues, “What

then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” So then, it is only through God’s electing grace that any are saved, both of the Jews, and also of the Gentiles. Now this salvation is from all sin and death, unto perfect holiness and life eternal. This is the glory of grace and election. Through these is the God of electing grace glorified forever and ever. Sin, as a destructive monster, hath reigned unto death, even in the chosen people of God; “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” The very thought of continuing in sin is, therefore, abhorrent to the election of grace, for this heavenly way of salvation is through righteousness and holiness, and this royal princess of heaven reigns in and over her chosen and blessed subjects by the holy Son of God, the King of righteousness. It is a slanderous and base imputation, then, to say that, “Because God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation,” in a way of abounding and sovereign grace, the sacred incentive unto holiness and devout obedience is taken away or denied; nay, rather, it is established. For the King of glory, by whom grace reigns unto all the chosen of God, says, “For ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” It must be apparent to all spiritual minds that, since salvation from sin is through the election of grace, and grace reigns by our Lord Jesus, in whom God is well pleased, therefore grace is uplifting, heavenly and well pleasing to God in all its influence or effects and power, leading her subjects to praise and bless God and honor Christ, by whom grace reigns. And since the inspired servant of our Lord affirms that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, it is irreverent and sacrilegious to cast any reflections or reproaches upon the power and sufficiency of “the election of grace,” abounding, reigning grace, “the grace of God that bringeth salvation.” For there is not another way or principle, revealed from

God to men, which brings salvation from sin, and the deserts of sin. Why, then, should any sinner rail against grace, or talk of another principle of salvation than grace? For salvation is always from sin, and the dire consequences of sin, and it is unto righteousness in God's sight and acceptance with him. Can anything besides "the election of grace" thus save us, and present us holy and without blame before God in love? Whether we speak of salvation in time, or in eternity, yet it is salvation from sin in some of its countless forms, and salvation by grace through God's election. Paul therefore says, "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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." Such, then, is the glorious purpose of our God in the choice of all the people and members of Christ, the elect and precious Head of his body, the church. Accordingly the earnest desire of all the "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," is, with David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me." "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness." All righteousness, therefore, has its source in "the election of grace," through Jesus Christ the righteous, and the sanctification of the Spirit. Hence all divine excellence and true goodness in the chosen people, saved by the Lord, as "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," are "the fruit of the Spirit," by whom we are quickened, of whom we are born, as "born again," and by whom we truly say, "Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." Thus, and in this way only do any worship God in spirit and in truth, for all others are will worshipers, and worship and serve for reward, claiming salvation and its blessings conditionally for their works. Here are two opposite principles, and likewise two opposite classes of religious worshipers, one resulting from "the election of grace," according as God hath chosen and blessed us in Christ, and hath now also created us in him unto good works, which

he hath before ordained that we should walk in them; the other is according to a covenant which is legal and conditional, and which says, “The man that doeth these things, he shall live by them.” There is only two ways of salvation, neither can there be any other way, for there is no middle ground between grace and works, or between Jesus and man. “For man is a fallen sinner still, and grace shall reign alone.”

Let us now more specially notice that grace embraces divine election, and election embraces Jesus, the elect Head, and all the many members of the elect body of Christ, as the bride of the King’s Son, and as the children and heirs of God the Father, and joint-heirs with Christ, the first-born from the dead among many brethren. This, and all this, is the abounding grace of God.

*“Grace first ordained the way
To save rebellions man,
And all the steps that grace display,
Which drew the wondrous plan.”*

This wondrous plan is, as says a poet, “Sons we are through God’s election, who in Jesus Christ believe.” Or as God the Father says, which is better, “I will put my laws info their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” And as Jesus the Son says, “Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” And to Mary he said, “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” Thus, the risen and glorified Son of God still owns his lowly disciples in brotherhood with himself on the Father’s side, while he is equally their Brother on the mother’s side. This wonderful and ever blessed relationship exists in the election of God’s grace. This is truly glorious grace. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!” And since the Father calls us his

sons, this holy relationship exists and abides in us. What “amazing grace,” that children of earth, creatures of a day, should be the sons and daughters of “the mighty God, the everlasting Father,” and brethren of “the Prince of peace.” This is God’s new covenant with his chosen people, whom he foreknew, in which he takes away their sins, and is merciful to their unrighteousness; and this covenant of life and peace is in “the grace of God that bringeth salvation “to dying sinners, to the aged men and aged women, to the young women and young men, to the servants and to the masters. Its heaven-inspired and heart-responding sentiment is, that all the chosen and blessed, predestinated and called, justified and glorified people of the living God, should be forever “to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.”

Yours in Jesus, D. BARTLEY.

48 Correspondence Feb. 3, 1897

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CORRESPONDENCE FEB. 3, 1897

CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND., Feb. 3, 1897.

ELDER P. A. Chick – MY DEAR BROTHER: – The inclosed from sister Minnie B. Matthew will interest you, and it is at your disposal, by her leave. Most fully do I concur with her in reference to the unlimited meaning of Paul’s strong and comforting statement, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” It must be so, for Paul again says that God “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;” and all who love God are the

beloved of him, we know. Then will he not control and overrule all things to the ultimate good of his foreknown and beloved people, “To them who are the called according to his purpose?” Assuredly he will. It were unbelief to say otherwise, and would be limiting the power of the Most High. Following right on in the strong assurance of faith in God, Paul boldly asks, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ! shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword!” He repels such a thought, saying, “Nay, in all these things we are mere than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Does not this enumeration include “all things?” Does not Paul’s divine Master assure his disciples of the same faithful love and care of God the Father, telling them that not a sparrow shall fall to the ground without his notice, and that the very hairs of their heads are numbered! And does not his servant Peter assure his brethren that they “are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation?” How then can anything arise against them outside of the “all things” that work together for their good! Hear Paul’s sweeping challenge, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect!”

“If God be for us, who can be against us?” All this comfortingly assures my faith that when Paul says, “All things work together for good to them that love God,” he means all things, and that there is not anything outside of all things, which shall not so work for their good. If such a thing were possible, it would be a mere chance event, and would deny the omnipotence of God. We rejoice that such a thing cannot be. It does not follow from this that the children of God’s love are either neutral, or passive, in their loving obedience to him, but the rather that this knowledge of this strong consolation brings them under the most sacred and endearing obligations to be his followers as dear children, running with patience the race that is

set before them. How blessed the divine assurance that the Lord encampeth round about his saints, and that their everlasting Father worketh in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Thus they are willing in the day of his power, in the beauties of holiness, and their delight is in the law of the Lord; they run, and are not weary in well doing, and walk in paths of holiness, and faint not. Therefore, brother Chick, it is a matter of sorrow and surprise to me, that any of our dear kindred in Christ could find it in their heart to even want to deny that God's sweetly reigning grace in the hearts of his children is the true source of all their willing and loving obedience. Why any one should insist, and even contend, that our salvation from sin and disobedience in time is a legal transaction, conditional, and not of grace, but depending upon ourselves, as a reward of merit, or as wages paid for our obedience – why any, who at all believes in salvation by grace, will contend for this legal transaction, is passing strange to me. For both revelation, and experience, teach us that nothing but the love of God abiding in the heart, and his grace sweetly reigning therein unto righteousness, will subdue the sinfulness of the flesh, the enmity of the carnal mind, and both teach and sweetly constrain any man or woman “to live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world.” Paul was not ashamed to say, “For the love of Christ constraineth us.” Nor to say again, “Put by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain; but I labored mere abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” He would have been grieved, had any minister of the gospel of grace charged upon his doctrine or teaching that it denied the accountability of the children of God to him, and reduced them to mere stocks or stones, or that his doctrine of grace charged all the meanness and bad acts of men upon God. To me it seems passing strange that any who are “saved by grace,” should want to deny that this grace saves them to the uttermost, from all their sins, meanness, unrighteousness and disobedience, in time, and unto blest eternity; for if grace does not save us from all these things, then will any one please tell me what does? “Are ye so foolish? having begun in the

Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” Was the poet in error when he sang,

*“’Twas glace that kept me to this day,
And will not let me go?”*

There is, there can be, but two principles or systems of salvation. One is grace, the other is works; one is unconditional, the other is conditional; one is of the Lord, the other is of man; one depends upon the Holy Spirit, the other “depends upon ourselves.” There is no such thing as blending, or mixing these two principles, for they are contrary the one to the other, and where one obtains, the other ceases. One bestows all the blessings received, as God’s free and unbought gift, the other deals them out as a debt paid for the good works done. One leads the seeking soul who desires salvation from every sin to cry, “God, be merciful to me a sinner,” the other disposes the sinner to say, “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are.” This radical difference runs throughout these two principles of salvation, and there is no escaping from these opposite effects, for every tree bears fruit after its own kind. Now then, if we apply the principle of unconditional salvation, or salvation by grace, to our everlasting salvation, but apply the principle of conditional salvation, or salvation of works, to our “time salvation,” we then have two principles and ways of salvation at war against each other, absolutely irreconcilable and contradictory, and make ourselves mere inconsistent than Arminians.

The address of Paul to the saints at Ephesus, also embraces all the chosen and predestinated people of the covenant God and Father, of whom he says, “Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace,

wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” Here we have in Christ all spiritual blessings vouchsafed to us, even unto perfect love and holiness, and full adoption, or redemption, in the everlasting presence of the Father and Son; and this, all this, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. Paul here covers the entire period of this blessed people’s salvation, from the choice in Christ before the world was, to their entrance into God’s presence as his glorified children; and through it all, from first to last, their only acceptance and approval is in the Beloved, and all to the praise of the glory of his grace. It is therefore true that every heavenly blessing we receive in time, as also in eternity, is a blessing of grace, and each sweet reward connected with our salvation, is a reward of grace, all given and treasured in the Lord Jesus, the spiritual head of the body, and freely bestowed upon the heirs of salvation for his righteousness’ sake, and in his name. This is God the Father’s will. O, what unspeakable and heavenly obligations all this salvation and blessing brings us under to be the followers of God as dear children, walking in love, and in loving and delightful obedience to the precious and beloved Savior. What child’s heart can resist the grateful incense of praise for blessings so infinite? or harden his heart against obligations and motives so heavenly and divine? What else than this heavenly fullness of abounding and saving grace, reigning through righteousness, will subdue our sins, fit us to walk in all the paths of holiness, and bring every thought into sweet obedience unto Christ? So, grace well deserves the praise. And when the glorious, heavenly temple is completed, and the Headstone is brought forth, it will be with shouting’s of grace, grace unto it. Even now my soul would join in this heavenly acclaim. Your brother in bonds of grace,

D. BARTLEY.